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Dresden
NY

The Canadian West

The Canadian West

ITS DISCOVERY

By the **Sieur De La Vérendrye.**

ITS DEVELOPMENT

By the **Fur-Trading Companies,** down to the year 1822.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

of Abbé G. DUGAS.

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INTRODUCTION

When I published the history of the Canadian West in French, it was my intention subsequently to issue an English edition; but, the translating and printing of such a work demanding considerable outlay, I have been obliged to await more favorable circumstances before putting the project into execution. To-day, with the assistance of a few generous friends, I feel capable of starting afresh and of carrying the enterprise to a successful issue.

My first purpose, in penning a history of the Canadian West, was to recall the memories of two illustrious names, that to-day are too frequently ignored, even by those who enjoy the fruits of their labors, and to justify them against the calumnies of their contemporaries; my second aim was to disabuse the public mind of certain false impressions regarding events of great importance which occurred in the North-West at a time when exact information was difficult to be obtained. Rarely is history impartially written. We are generally inclined to excuse the mistakes of our fellow-countrymen and to exaggerate those of foreigners. Had the writer allowed himself to be swayed by such feelings, he would have passed a very different judgment upon certain facts from that which is here expressed.

The reader may perhaps be astonished to find a French-Canadian missionary priest defending Scotch Protestants who were persecuted and calumniated by a Company that flaunted the title of a French company, and constituting himself the apologist of Lord Selkirk, who was vilified by the members of the same company. But, after having carefully weighed the value of the documents that

I had in hand, I felt, in conscience, that I could not otherwise judge the facts which lay before me.

If the celebrated North-West Company does not herein play the glorious part that has at times been attributed to it, I make answer that success, no matter how brilliant it may be, can never alone justify the means used in its attainment.

During the twenty-two years that the writer spent at the Red River, he gleaned traditions, he questioned the older ones of the country, he visited the places where all the facts here related happened, he learned by heart all that was told about the battle of Frog Lake, and the death of Governor Semple, who fell with twenty-one of his men near Fort Douglas; since then, he has read all that has been written by the North-West Company and by Lord Selkirk on the subject, and, in fine, he has reduced to a compendium the huge record of the law-suit instituted by Lord Selkirk against the Company and, from all these sources, has reached the conclusions that will be found set forth in this history.

La Vérendrye and Selkirk are the most interesting figures on the historical canvas of the North-West,—the former as a discoverer, the latter as the colonizer and civilizer of those wild regions — for it was he, Selkirk, who carried there the first seeds of real civilization by assisting in conducting thither the earliest missionaries. Wherefore the Catholics of Manitoba owe him an immense debt of gratitude.

It would be a praiseworthy deed were a monument erected in Winnipeg in honor of these two heroes of the North-West; we trust that this project may be some day realized.

Abbé Dugas.

I

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The Hudson Bay from its discovery by Hudson, in 1610, *to the discovery of the North-West, by the Sieur de la Vérendrye, in* 1731.

Before conducting the reader into the wilds of the Canadian West, along the pathway trod by de la Vérendrye and the Frenchmen who followed him, we consider it necessary to supply a few ideas about the history of the Hudson Bay, which now constitutes part of the Dominion of Canada. The events that took place in that wild country, from its discovery, are not without interest for us, since many of our fellow-countrymen played distinguished parts in the early struggles for the possession of that territory. On those bleak shores, bound up in ice, and closed out during the three-fourths of the year from the rest of the world, under that lowering sky, whose veil of fog the sun's beams can scarcely pierce, strange as it may seem, men pitched their habitations almost as early as upon the enchanting shores of Mexico.

While the vast, and as yet uninhabited, expanses of the United States allured men by the richness of their soil and the charms of their climate, the Hudson Bay — that distant corner of earth in the neighborhood of the Pole — awakened the covetousness of the Trading Companies, and for more than a century they wrangled over the possession of those eternal snows. Many a battle was there

waged, and many a soldier or sailor, performed feats of arms that were worthy the most renowned heroes of antiquity.

To-day, the earnestly-undertaken project of constructing a railway in that direction, for the purpose of establishing more rapid communication between the Canadian West and Europe, will lend a two-fold interest to the history of that country and of its first settlements. That story will, moreover, serve as an introduction to the discovery of the North-West by de la Vérendrye, for, at every step, we have occasion to mention the Hudson Bay as we relate the adventurous voyages of the discoverer.

Scarcely had the existence of the New World been made known, by Christopher Columbus, to Europe, than ambition at once led the navigators of those times into the higher latitudes along the North American coast. They expected, north of the newly-discovered lands, to find a passage conducting to the rich fields of India, which the Portuguese reached by way of the Orient.

The first navigator who, after the discovery of America, pushed into the northern seas over the Atlantic, was John Cabot, who discovered the island of Newfoundland, in 1497. His son, Sebastian Cabot, under the protection of King Henry VII. of England, undertook a voyage, in 1498. He set out in the beginning of the summer, and sailed towards the North-West, with the idea of reaching China in a direct manner; but, to his great dissatisfaction, after a few weeks' sailing, he came upon the American coast, which he followed northerly to the 56th degree. There, finding that the land sloped to the East,

he gave up all hope of finding the desired passage, and so retraced his steps.

Two years after this voyage of Cabot — about the year 1500 — a Portuguese, named Corteréal, followed the coast of Labrador to the point where it bends westward to form the southern shore of the strait leading into the Hudson Bay. (The Hudson Strait.) Without going any farther to verify his discovery, he imagined that he was in presence of the passage leading to China, and at once hastened back to Portugal to make known the happy result of his voyage.

The following year he set out afresh, this time intending to pass through the strait, the entrance to which he had only seen; but he and his crew were lost in the ice and no traces of them were ever found. A few years later his brother met the same fate in going to find him.

We read in the *Relations of the Jesuits* (Vol. 1, page 2), that in the year 1524, a Florentine, named Verrazzano, by order of Francis the First of France, visited the American coast, from Florida to Cape Breton, and took possession of all those lands in the name of the French king; however, he did not go as far north as his predecessors.

Martin Forbisher, a noted English navigator, having sought in vain, by three consecutive voyages (1577 — 1578 — 1579), to find the desired passage across the continent, ended his explorations in northern seas with the discovery of a few islands in the vicinity of Greenland.

Eight years later, in 1587, John Davis, another English navigator, sailed past the entrance of the Hudson Bay; and if any navigator were aware of the existence of that inland sea before 1610, none ever described it.

It was at the beginning of the Seventeenth century, in the year 1610, that Henry Hudson was sent by England in search of the famous passage—supposed to exist, but never discovered. He was a mariner of consummate experience and dauntless bravery. During the previous years, Hudson had sailed along the north of Asia, skirting the coast of Nova-Zembla, and touching at Spitzbergen. This intrepid sailor had launched his vessel into the labyrinth of those terrible ice-bergs and fast-ice, but he was unable to penetrate beyond the 82° parallel. Checked on that side, he steered south-west, wound round Greenland, and discovered, in sailing towards the west, the immense strait where Corteréal thought he beheld a route to the Pacific Ocean. The vessel which carried him was called the "Discoveries," a ship of seventy tons.

He pushed on to the end of the Bay, carefully examining the western shore, and in the month of November he worked his way into a sheltering recess at the south-west extremity. Into this recess he towed his vessel for winter quarters.

On leaving England, Hudson had taken supplies for only six months. The season was rigorous, but Hudson was the first to share the privations. The provisions on board became scarce, but as long as the snows lasted the partridge and other game that they killed kept the crew free from the terrors of hunger. With the spring thaw hunting failed them. Hudson, in a canoe, spent nine days ranging along the shores in search of some Indians from whom he might secure food. Not meeting with any he returned to the vessel, which he launched into deep water to return to England. He distributed his few remaining biscuits amongst his sailors and settled each one's account, accompanying the same with a certificate of

service that might be used to secure their future in case he should happen to die.

Deeply affected by their sufferings, and as he had a presentiment that he would never reach England, he wept bitter tears as he completed the final settlements. But these evidences of his solicitude made no impression upon the men who had vowed his ruin.

In the previous month of September, on account of the mutinies that he stirred up amongst the crew, Robert Ivett had been relieved of his position as mate. His accomplices resolved to avenge him. At their head was a scoundrel named Henry Green, an Irishman, whose life Hudson had saved in London, by keeping him in his own house and later on, unknown to the owners, on board the vessel. On the 11th June, 1611, when the vessel was ready to sail, they seized the captain, his son, who was only a child, Mr. Woodhouse, a mathematician, who had taken the trip as a volunteer, the carpenter and five others, placed them in a row-boat, and left them to their fate, without either provisions or arms. The boat touched an island where they went ashore, and where they all died of hunger; their bodies were found, the following year, by Thomas Button.

Heaven did not permit such a crime to go unpunished. Green and two of his accomplices were killed in a fight that the vessel's crew had with some Indians; Robert Ivett died miserably during the homeward voyage; and it was only after having met with untold calamities that the shattered remnant of the crew reached England. Nabacus Prickett, who related the sad story of those misadventures, was, probably, as deeply dyed as the rest of the murderous crew, but having been able to make him-

self exceedingly useful to the ship-owners, he managed to escape the punishment that he so well merited.

In the beginning of May, 1612, Thomas Button, who was an able sailor, started for the Hudson Bay with two vessels, the "Discoveries" and the "Resolution." While crossing the Bay, he touched on an island where he found the bodies of the unfortunate Hudson and his companions. On the 15th August he entered a creek, to the north of a river which he called Nelson; later on the French gave it its name. (1)

Having made his way there, he placed his two vessels side by side, fortified them with a barricade of spruce trees planted in the ground and cemented together with clay, against the snow, the ice and the waves. A complete association of able and experienced men: Nelson, his lieutenant on board the "Resolution"; Ingram, commander of the "Discoverie"; Gillam, able sailor; Hawbridge, who wrote an account of the voyage; Hubert, an observant and discerning character; Prickett, one of the unfortunate Hudson's companions. Three large fires kept the crew from the cold; abundance covered their table; during the course of the winter they killed twenty thousand partridges. In a word, perfect contentment would have reigned in that little town, had it not been marred by the extreme rigour of the winter and the sickness that carried off several members of the crew. To prevent all loneliness and murmurings, Button had the wisdom to find occupation for his men: some he employed blazing paths through the woods and measuring distances, others he

(1) Nelson was the master on one of Button's ships. He died at the Bay, and was buried on the bank of the river that bears his name.

set to studying certain subjects of practical utility in the prosecution of their discoveries.

Button put to sea again in the month of June, 1613, pushed northward to the 65th degree, and returned to England firmly convinced of the existence of the passage that he sought to discover. He gave his name to the islands that we find in groups at the entrance of the strait leading into the Hudson Bay. Hence, by a mistranslation of the the name Button, the French called those islands the *îles Boutons,* or *Button Islands.*

In 1614, Captain Gibbons, a relative of Button, to whom the latter had given instructions, was sent on a voyage of discovery to the Hudson Bay; but his was an unfortunate trip. He missed the entrance to the Hudson Strait, and was carried by the ice to the 57th degree of latitude at the north-east extremity of the continent. He entered a bay where for three weeks he remained in a state of constant peril. So shattered was his vessel that he had great difficulty in returning to England.

The following year, 1615, the vessel was repaired and sent out again under command of Captain Robert Bylot, an able seaman who had taken part in the three preceding expeditions. He took with him the famous William Baffin, who had already considerable experience on the northern seas. Great results were expected of this expedition.

Bylot set sail on the 18th April. He forged northward to the 65th degree, but was no more successful than his predecessors in discovering the passage to the Western Ocean. He returned to England convinced that no such passage existed. After Bylot's failure, expeditions in the direction of the Hudson Bay were abandoned for some fifteen years. It was captain Lucas Fox, who, in

1631, first atter pted another expedition in that direction. He was a born sailor. Twenty years before undertaking the voyage in question, he had commenced to make studious resear hes into the project of discovering a passage to the Western Ocean. Merchants of Bristol and London formed an association together to raise funds to defray the cos of this expedition. Fox was given a twenty-ton vess l, the "Charles" provisioned for eighteen months, and p n every respect. He prepared everyt he beginning of May, 1631. So certa ould succeed in reaching the Pacific ried with him a letter from the King Emperor of Japan.

Fox had a s ascended a considerable distance o s of the sea that reach into the Arctic han any of his predecessors, he expl s well as the laws that govern the tid me to a strait that is still known as

In the year 1631, another mariner, captain James, started from England, at the same time as Fox, and found his way to the very end of the Hudson Bay: he was the first to sail over the James Bay, which derives its name from him.

Fox returned to England perfectly disillusioned regarding the much sought for passage; and captain James made such a fearful report of all the hardships that he had endured, that it spread consternation amongst the English people. For over thirty years, the frightened explorers would not dare to steer their vessels in that direction.

Historians relate that about 1634, a Danish vessel entered the Hudson Bay and proceeded along its shores

a distance of about one hundred and eighty miles north of the Nelson river. There, they entered the mouth of a river, which they called the Danish River and which the Indians styled the Manitew-sipi (or river of the strangers.) The vessel being icebound, the crew spent the winter on the shores of the Bay. The sufferings they underwent caused most of them to perish; only five or six were able to resist sufficiently to take to sea in the spring, and to reach, after countless dangers, the port of Copenhagen.

In 1646, Latour, whose name became famous in Acadia, undertook to go fur-trading at the Hudson Bay; but he did not repeat his attempt. In 1656, Jean Bourdon, of Quebec, went as far as the Hudson Strait, and then turned back.

Down to this point we see that these numerous voyages to the northern seas were undertaken in the name of science, and that no person, so far, ever dreamed of settling upon those inhospitable shores to develop the wealth that they contain. The glory of discovery was the sole passion of these mariners and of the powerful associations that furnished them with means. About 1662, England had almost lost sight of the fruits of her discoveries, when a Canadian stepped in to revive the idea of the immense advantages to trade and commerce that a country deemed "uninhabitable" might afford. (1)

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(1) Are the lands that stretch along the shores of the Hudson Bay habitable? If, by the word "habitable" is implied the possibility of human beings living in those regions — exactly speaking, we say, "yes." For there, on the shores of that Bay, for over two centuries, there have been establishments where Europeans lived and carried on the fur-trade; but if by habitable is meant the cultivation of the soil, we must reply in the negative — it is not habitable. It is a country where the Indians

II.

Chouart des roscilliers—His voyages to the Hudson Bay.

The name of Chouart des Groseilliers must henceforth be celebrated in the annals of the Hudson Bay settlements, for it was he, who first had the honor of building a fort in that distant country.

Of French origin, he was but a child when he arrived in Canada. For several years he lived with the Ursulines in Quebec. Marie de l'Incarnation speaks of him as a promising youth, blessed with an

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alone can eke out ... ing (and happily game is abundant).

The soil never ... the depth of one foot, and during all the ... are heavy frosts. The breaking up of the ... comes before the middle of June, and the ... at the end of September. The sea is completely open only in July, August and September, and even during these months vessels are constantly exposed to meet with huge icebergs, when the wind blows from the North. It is not unfrequent that vessels are stopped at the entrance to the Bay, in August, by the ice.

To-day, with steam ships, whose progress does not depend on the caprice of the wind, it is easier to reach the end of the Bay than it was formerly with sailing vessels, and during three months of the year a regular line of vessels for the transportation of our Western Canadian products could be established between Port Nelson and England.

If such a project were to succeed, it would be of immense advantage for all the establishments along the great Saskatchewan. A railway, constructed from the lower part of that river to the sea, would be relatively very short for the exportation of grain, which could be sent to Europe at a cost much lower than by way of the Canadian Pacific line.

But, if that vast scheme should ever be realized, the country around the Hudson Bay will remain none the less a land where white men could never attempt the raising of cereals, and we might say that those regions are only truly habitable for Indians born under that sky and in those latitudes.

energetic and enterprizing character. He soon became familiar with the Indian languages and spoke them with great facility. Early in life he made lengthy excursions amongst the Indians, for the purposes of discovery and of fur trading. He associated with himself, in such trips, Pierre Esprit Radisson, who was born in Paris, and came to Canada to give free rein to his adventurous inclinations.

On the 24th August, 1653, des Groseilliers married Marguerite Hayet, a sister of Radisson, on the mother's side.

It has frequently been said that des Groseilliers was a Huguenot. As to Radisson, there is no doubt on that score. Perhaps, even, the wife of des Groseilliers belonged to the same religion as her brother; but as to des Groseilliers, himself, it is quite certain that he was a Catholic; his name appears in the registers of Three Rivers, as having been god-father to several children.

Before entering into partnership with des Groseilliers for those voyages, Radisson had already taken flying trips to the Indians of the West. These two, daring to temerity as they were, had a passionate ambition to make fortunes and above all to gain renown — they were fashioned to move together.

In the year 1658 they went as far as Lake Superior and made the acquaintance of the different tribes that inhabited that region. They spent the years 1658 and 1659 in wandering around that great lake and carrying on a fur trade. During all that time, they had numerous opportunities of securing information regarding the countries more to the north and the west. A band of Cree Indians from the shores of the James Bay, spent the winter of 1659 in their camp and invited them to go and trade with them at the sea coast. Des Groseilliers promised them

to do so on another occasion, and he learned from them a great deal concerning the distances to be traversed in order to reach their country.

Early in the spring of 1660, Radisson and des Groseilliers went down to Quebec. Their cargo of furs was simply enormous. Five hundred Indians accompanied them on the trip. When the little fleet reached Quebec, in order to astonish the Indians, the authorities caused the canons to be fired and the flags to be unfurled.

Such a harvest of rich furs could not but excite the curiosity of a great many people in Quebec as well as in Three Rivers. The governor of the latter place would have been glad to have had a share in the prosecution of that branch of trade. It is well known that certain governors of Canada were no strangers to the same ambition. He, of Three Rivers, offered des Groseilliers and Radisson to associate with them two of his followers, on condition that they would have half of the profits. The two *trappeurs* knew that they could easily have the entire profits for themselves, so they refused the offer. The governor, for revenge, forbade them, for the future, to go trading with the Indians, and even ordered them to leave the colony under pain of imprisonment.

For the time being, they gave up the idea of a second trip to the West and matters so remained until the month of August 1661, when seven canoes filled with Indians arrived at Three Rivers.

Des Groseilliers' mind was soon made up. He notified the Indians to wait for him and his brother-in-law, at the foot of Lake St. Peter, and he watched for a favourable moment to escape from the fort. It was not a difficult matter, for he was a captain at Three Rivers, and in virtue of that rank he held the keys of the fort. About mid-

night, he opened the gate and, accompanied by Radisson, went to join the Indians. Once outside he was at ease, for he knew well that no pursuit would be attempted.

They went to Lake Superior; probably to the same place where they had traded so successfully during the previous years. It is almost certain that this time they carried their discoveries as far north as the James Bay. Radisson, in his notes, says positively that, in 1663, they reached the shores of a sea. "where they found an old house all demolished." But his notes are so far from precise that there is always an uncertainty as to the places that he wishes to designate.

After three years of wandering in different directions, trusting that the governor had forgotten their escapade, they thought of returning to Quebec. They secured seven hundred Indians to accompany them and they reached Three Rivers during the summer of 1664.

Their reception at the hands of the governor was far different from that which they had expected. Their great success only helped to sour him the more against them and to cause him to exercise a personal vengeance upon them. The sight of the rich furs that the canoes contained rekindled his rancour; and he made des Groseilliers pay a fine of two thousand dollars.

Des Groseilliers reckoned upon all the profits of his trading for means to go to the Hudson Bay by sea. The sum exacted from him by the governor made an enormous hole in his little fortune; still, he was not discouraged, nor did he abandon his project. He applied to Quebec merchants, proposing to them the formation of a company of which he would be one of the principal shareholders; but as the merchants did not meet his views, he resolved to apply to the Court of France, to have his plans adopted,

and, at the same time, to have the $2.000, which the governor of Three Rivers extorted from him, refunded.

His stay in Paris was very short. While he was received with politeness, he soon learned that fair words were all that he would receive. He returned to Quebec, where, by dint of applying, he secured a small vessel on which he, his brother-in-law and only seven sailors set out for the Hudson Bay.

On his way, he stopped for a few days to trade at St. Pierre, Cape Breton. Thence, he sailed for Port Royal. (1) Time pressed, for the season was advanced and the sea was becoming dangerous for northern navigation. He proposed to his crew a visit to the New England coast to see if he could not find a better vessel for his expedition. There happened to be, by chance, at that moment, some Boston shipowners at Port Royal; des Groseilliers laid certain proposals before them which were accepted, and it was resolved that they would furnish him with a vessel to start immediately on his exploration of the Hudson Bay coast.

His vessel merely touched shore at the Hudson Bay; he only had time to exchange a few words with the natives, when he returned to Boston for the winter.

In the spring of 1665, the English shipowners, who had promised des Groseilliers two vessels, sent him, with Radisson, to Sable Island to fish, while awaiting the breaking up of the ice in the north. From that time forward a series of adventures and mishaps, delayed for three years the realization of his scheme.

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(1) Port Royal was an ancient fort in Acadia, now Nova Scotia.

He set sail towards the end of July. Scarcely had he got to sea, when a furious tempest drove his vessel ashore and wrecked it. He returned to Boston; there he met with Colonel George Cartright, a member of the Royal Commission appointed to regulate the most important questions in the colony. He offered des Groseilliers to take him with him to London, and there to present him to the King of England, who would not fail to look with favor upon his undertaking. Des Groseilliers expecting help from nowhere else, and having so far met only with indifference in Canada, accepted the Colonel's offer and, with his brother-in-law, sailed away to present his plans to the Court at London.

They started from Boston on the 1st August, 1665; their ship was unfortunately attacked by a Dutch vessel; they were all made prisoners and taken to Spain. Thence, they proceeded to England, where they arrived on the 25th October of the same year (1665).

At once on his arrival, des Groseilliers obtained an audience with the King. The account that he gave of his discoveries and of the hopes that he entertained for the future, so interested Charles II., that he promised to supply him with a vessel for the following spring (1666). In the meanwhile the King had an allowance of 40 shillings a week each supplied to the two travellers.

The war between England and Holland caused the expedition to be postponed until the year 1668. Wearied by so much delay, des Groseilliers asked to be presented to Prince Rupert, the King's cousin, with the hope of interesting him in the enterprise. The Prince received him most heartily and equipped two ships for him that were to be ready for the spring of 1668. The names of the two ships were the "Aigle" and the "Incomparable."

These two vessels sailed from Gravesend, on the 3rd June, 1668. Des Groseilliers was on board the "Incomparable," commanded by captain Zacharias Gillam. A terrible storm struck them off the coast of Ireland. The vessel which carried Radisson was so badly wrecked that it had to return to England; des Groseilliers continued the voyage alone.

Captain Gillam landed in the Hudson Bay at the mouth of a river, to which he gave the name Rupert; he there built a fort where they might pass the winter and be sheltered against any Indian attacks. Fur-trading was plentiful; the vessel was loaded, and in the springtime the expedition returned to London.

The success of that trip was a perfect revelation for the merchants of England. There could be no longer any doubt; the Hudson Bay was a rich mine to be worked; but, for that purpose, a well-organized company would have to be formed.

A number of leading personages of the Court requested Charles II. to accord them a charter, granting them the exclusive privilege of fur-trading on all the lands the waters of which flowed into the Hudson Bay. That charter was accorded to Prince Rupert, on the 2nd May, 1670.

The following is a list of the first shareholders of the Hudson Bay Company:

1. Prince Rupert,
2. Christopher, Duke of Albermale.
3. William, Count Craven,
4. Henry, Lord Arlington.
5. Anthony, Lord Ashly,
6. Sir John Robinson, Kt.,

7. Sir Robert Voyer. Baronet,
8. Sir Peter Culleton, Baronet,
9. Sir Edward Hungerford, Kt.,
10. Sir John Griffith, Kt.,
11. Sir Paul Neele, Kt.,
12. Sir Philippe Carteret, Kt.,
13. James Hynes. Esq.,
14. John Kirk, Esq.,
15. Francis Millington. Esq.
16. William Prettyman, Esq..
17. John Fenn, Esq.,
18. John Portman, Esq.,

Such was the origin of the famous Hudson Bay Company.

* * *

As soon as the charter was granted, the Company sent Charles Bayley, as Governor, to the Bay; he went with des Groseilliers, who took him to Fort Rupert, where he had spent the previous winter. However, before the end of the autumn, the governor had the Fort removed to the Moose river, at the end of the James Bay, as it was a more suitable place for trading.

Des Groseilliers resided at that post for about three years — until 1674. During that time Radisson made several journeys to Europe.

From the extremity of the James Bay, governor Bayly neglected no opportunity of extending the Company's trade, and of drawing the natives to him. He visited the Albany river and pushed his discoveries along the shores of the Bay as far as Cape Henrietta, situated at the 55th degree of latitude.

The French, who were exploring the Western country in the directio of Lake Superior, and the Canadian *coureurs de boi* — on the Lake Abitibi side — vigourously opposed the operations of the Hudson Bay Company. The French ha a Fort built about eight days' walk from that on the M oose river, and there they stopped the Indians who w re going to the Bay. The Canadian *trappeurs,* who kne so well how to work in with the Indians and win their m towards the French posts. Thus, n from the neighborhood of Lake Super hat were much nearer the Hudson B le with the Canadians who came with ance from Moose Factory.

The Governc Company's traffic decreased daily, a appear on that side, resolved to send loose river to meet the Indian hunters furs. He selected des Groseilliers to dition. In the spring, he returned to Moose Factory with one hundred and fifty beaver skins.

While Governor Bayly, assisted by des Groseilliers, laboured to secure the Company's trade along the shores of the Hudson Bay, very important events had occurred in Europe.

FRANCE LAYS CLAIM TO HER RIGHTS ON THE HUDSON BAY.

The organization of a great company in London for the prosecution of the fur trade, at the Hudson Bay, could not have remained unnoticed. The expensive privileges *accorded* by the King of England to that company of trad-

ers, the sending of a governor to establish posts in those regions, had all the effect of awakening France to a realization of the mistake made by the Court, in not paying more attention to the representations of des Groseilliers. That mistake entailed enormous losses for the whole nation.

During the summer of 1671 Father Albanel, a Jesuit missionary in Canada, left Quebec with letters for Governor Bayly and des Groseilliers. He had been sent secretly, by the French government, to convey to des Groseilliers a note requesting him to return to France. The missionary was accompanied by M. de Saint-Simon, and the Sieur Couture. He left Tadousac on the 8th August, ascended the Saguenay to Lake St. John, the windings of which he followed until he reached the river Mistassini, which, in turn, he went along as far as a *chute,* or falls, where to-day is the establishment of the Trappist Fathers. As the season was advanced, the three travellers and their Indian guides spent the winter at that place. In the spring they continued their journey and reached the shores of the James Bay on the 28th June, 1672. At the foot of a large tree they buried a brass plate, on which were carved the arms of the great monarch — the French King — and there, amidst the waste lands of the north, they claimed all that country for France.

Despite that solemn proclamation, England remained convinced that she had rights to those territories.

Father Albanel went to Moose Factory, handed to the governor and to des Groseilliers the letters that had been confided to him for each of them, and immediately started back for Quebec.

The letters, which the missionary Father had given des Groseilliers as well as the conversations which he had

with him, creat d a suspicion in the minds of the English at Moose Facto y. Des Groseilliers had betrayed his own nation, he coul equally as well betray strangers. The officers of the (ompany began to make him feel that they were suspiciou of him. Humiliated by such treatment on their part, a d despite the error he had committed, des Groseilliers th ught seriously of returning to France. He left the Hu lson Bay with the vessels that sailed for London, in Jul ber of that same year he reached Par ted himself before the great minister

At different invited des Groseilliers and Radisson t ce of France. It was well known at two men were neces- sary for the re id at the Hudson Bay. Under any oth e two traitors would have been puni stance, Colbert simply upbraided then conduct, and promised them letters of pa offered them lucrative employment which they accepted; for the moment, however, he did not speak to them of any fresh expedition to the Hudson Bay, for he wished to first feel assured of their sincerity in coming back to the French cause. Des Groseilliers returned to Canada and settled down at Three-Rivers; Radisson entered the marine service. In 1682, we find them both again at the Hudson Bay.

During the years that elapsed, from 1676 to 1682, we nowhere find that England had been disturbed in her establishments at the Hudson Bay. The Company took advantage of that quietness to extend its trade and to erect other Forts, or Factories as they were called. Their only rivals, that we have any knowledge of, were the *coureurs des bois* from the great lakes.

During those six years of peace the Company realized huge profits, for the richest of furs came to them from the North and the West.

In Canada, the Quebec merchants, who were aware of the immense profits derived from the fur trade, beheld, not without vexation, the planting of so many English establishments at their very doors.

The Intendant of the colony, M. de la Chesnaie, offered to place des Groseilliers at the head of an expedition to Hudson Bay, telling him that it would be fair opportunity for him to redeem his former treason. He engaged to supply two vessels for the spring of 1682. Des Groseilliers accepted. In the month of July, he and his brother-in-law, Radisson, started away on the "Saint-Pierre" and the "Charente."

The vessel that carried des Groseilliers was an excellent one; the other was old and not very safe for such a voyage. They called at Percé Island, and continued on the 11th July. They were again forced to halt in a roadstead off the coast of Labrador; they took advantage of the delay to trade with the Esquimaux. On the 28th August, the two vessels entered the Hayes river on the west coast of the Bay. They ascended that river for about fifteen miles, to a place where they fixed their winter quarters.

Their trading, during that winter, was very extensive. From the moment of his arrival there, des Groseilliers, who was acquainted with all the Indians, and who spoke their language fluently, formed an alliance with the different tribes, and obtained their promise not to go to the James Bay with their furs nor to treat with the English. They kept their word.

Shortly after his advent two English vessels arrived at the mouth of the Hayes river, and there went into winter

quarters. Radisson, with some fifteen men, went to warn them that the French had prior possession there, that their post, a few miles further up, was well supplied with men, provisions and munitions, and that they intended to have their rights respected. The English believed them and remained shut up in their encampment, without ever attempting to trade with the Indians. In the spring time, des Groseilliers and Radisson, with a rich cargo of fur, started home to France, leaving a son of the former in charge of the Fort. They brought with them the remnants of the English crews, their numbers having been greatly diminished by hunger and sufferings during the winter.

Des Groseilliers and Radisson were well received in France. The Minister of Marine ordered two new vessels for them to be ready by the following spring, and he rewarded them liberally for the services they had rendered.

Matters seemed to have taken a favourable turn for France when Radisson was again won over by the English; and he drew des Groseilliers after him. (1)

On the 17th May, 1684, Radisson departed for the Hudson Bay, on board the "Happy Return," while des Groseilliers, who was worn out from his many trips, remained in England. In Canada and in France, it was believed that he had gone again to the Hudson Bay, and efforts were made to secure anew his services for his own country which he had twice betrayed. In the month of August, 1684, M. de la Barre sent a letter to M. Duluth, who was trading near Lake Nepigon, to be transmitted des Groseilliers. Duluth confided the letter to a half-breed,

(1) All these details we have found in Radisson's own diary.

named Péré, charging him to convey it to des Groseilliers at the Nelson river.

"As I came out from Lake Nepigon," wrote Duluth to de la Barre, "I met de la Croix with his two companions, who handed me your letters, in which you charge me to spare nothing in having your letters reach Chouart des Groseilliers, at the Nelson river. In order to fulfil your instructions, it was necessary that M. Péré should himself go." (1)

It can be seen by those despatches of de la Barre how anxious they were to have des Groseilliers back in Canada. But while he was resting in England, his brother-in-law, Radisson, reached the Hudson Bay and delivered over the French Fort to the English, who found therein one thousand dollars worth of furs.

In the autumn of 1684, the "Compagnie du Nord," at Quebec, fitted out, at its own expense, a vessel for the purpose of retaking, by surprise, the French Fort; but the attempt completely failed, and the company suffered a loss of over twenty-five thousand dollars.

In the following year (1685), the French Court complained to the cabinet at London, and demanded the restitution of the French Forts on the Hudson Bay. The negotiations dragged along, and, in 1686, the English government had not yet made answer to the complaints of France. The "Compagnie du Nord," to indemnify itself for the losses of the second year previous undertook to do justice to itself. It obtained from the Marquis de Denonville a detachment of eighty men, nearly all Canadians, under the command of the Chevalier de Troyes, to proceed overland and retake all the English Forts at the

(1) M. Péré was taken prisoner at Fort Albany and sent to England.

Hudson Bay. The famous Sainte Hélène d'Iberville and de Méricour formed part of that expedition.

They started from Montreal in the month of March and reached the Hudson Bay on the 18th June. No person at the English Forts, or Factories, could have had the slightest suspicion of an attack from that direction; especially at that time of the year. They were all taken by surprise and did not offer the slightest resistance.

The little troop took possession of all the Company's Forts, with the exception of Fort Bourbon, and the French held possession of them until 1692. In 1693, England succeeded in retaking Fort Sainte Anne, which was only occupied by five Canadians.

In 1694, d'Iberville made a fresh attempt to secure possession of Fort Bourbon, which was the most important one of the lot; after a siege of a few weeks, he succeeded in his purpose. The Fort capitulated on the 15th October, 1694. However, the French did not long remain in peaceful possession of that post.

On the 2nd September, 1696, the English arrived at the Hudson Bay with four men-of-war and a bomb-galley. On the 15th of the same month they attacked the Fort, which was defended by only fourteen men. At the end of a couple of days, the garrison capitulated. All the members of that little band were taken to England, where, for four months, they were detained in prison.

The following year d'Iberville set out again, this time with four vessels, to reconquer the Hudson Bay. In that expedition he was successful beyond all his expectations; he took every one of their trading posts from the English, and France became mistress of all that region until the year 1714, when, by the treaty of Utrecht, the Hudson Bay territory was restored to England — and has ever since remained in her possession.

THE CANADIAN WEST

CHAPTER I.

SUMMARY.

How far the trappers had advanced into the West before de la Vérendrye. — Voyage of the Canadian De Noyon to the Lake of the Woods. — Various exploration schemes.

One fact is certain, that from the earliest days of the Canadian colony on the banks of the St. Lawrence, the hunters — *coureurs des bois* — carried away by the spirit of adventure and the charms of a life in the wilds of the New World, found their way far into the West amongst the Indian tribes. It is even probable that a number of these trappers settled down amongst them and never returned to civilization. These white men, who adopted the Indian mode of existence, were brave, hardy, enterprizing and fearless. The civilized life, that they had led in the beginning, imparted to them a great superiority over the most able amongst the Indians. These latter admitted them to their councils, and frequently selected them as chiefs of different tribes, especially on account of their resourcefulness in difficult situations.

The adventurous life of the Canadian trapper, whereon many a novelist based his stories, and after which he painted his heroes, was perhaps more real than is commonly believed.

The first missionaries, who went among the Indians of

the West, met with many striking examples of the descendants of white people intermixed with the Indian race. The color of the hair and of the eyes as well as the oval form of their faces left no room for doubt as to the blending of their blood. You can never be mistaken with regard to the pure-blooded Indian. Their cheek-bones are always prominent and their hair is invariably black and crisp.

The renowned Cree Chief, Poundmaker, who played such an important role in the North-West Rebellion, of 1885, although born of an Indian tribe, had certainly French blood in his veins. His beautiful, wavy, auburn looks, and his soft blue eyes did not denote a full-blood Indian.

* * *

In the year 1688, a Canadian, named De Noyon, a native of Three-Rivers, spent the winter with the Indians on the islands of the Lake of the Woods. On his return he gave a very detailed account of the route he had followed to reach the lake where he had wintered.

In a memorandum annexed to a letter from Messrs. de Vaudreuil and Bégon, addressed to His Grace the Duke of Orleans, on the 13th February, 1717, we find that report *in extenso*:

"In coming out, we enter the Kaministiquia river. We go up that river for thirty miles, after which there is a portage of about ten acres, where we shoulder the canoes. After the portage there is a rapid about thirty miles long, and from the said rapid there is a portage of one acre.

"Nine miles from the said portage there is another one

of three miles in length, called the Dog Portage, after which we enter a lake about nine miles long to reach the same river Kaministiquia, which we follow for forty-five miles. After which we find a portage of three miles, and there is a lake without any outlet, being in the middle of a swamp. (1)

"This lake is about thirty acres wide, and is at the Height of Land.

"At the end of this lake we have to portage through a swamp for about three miles; then we enter a river that is about thirty miles, and which goes down into a lake called Canoe Lake. We cross this lake for some eighteen miles to the right, and enter a bay, where we portage over a poplar point for about three accres. Thence we come upon a little river filled with wild oats, and along which we travel for two days in canoes, making thirty miles a day. After that we come to a fall where there is about an acre of portage.

"At the end of this portage there is a rocky strait about an acre long, which extends to the foot of Christinaux Lake. This lake is about fifteen hundred miles around. We coast along the left bank for a distance of twenty-four miles, at the end of which the lake empties into and forms the river Takamamiwen, otherwise called *Ouichichick,* by the Crees. For eight days we go down that river for a distance of two hundred and forty miles, without meeting any rayids. (2)

"Six miles from the entrance to this river, however, a little portage of about an acre must be made. On coming

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(1) The Canadian Pacific Railway has to-day at that point a station of considerable importance, called *Savanne*

(2) This is the river now called *Rainy River.*

out of this rive we enter the Lake of the Islands (Lac des Iles), otherwis called, by the Blackstone people, Lake of the Assiniboine .

"This lake, the south side, is lined with barren expanses, while c the north side it is covered with all kinds of wood and ringed with islands. At the end of this lake is a river at flows into the Western Sea, according to the Indian r ports."

The Indians oyon to take him with them to the W

The above n in the first place, that the route from e Lake of the Woods, and even to th d been explored long before the voy ye. Moreover, it was the route whi wed on his way to the places where h les and it was exactly the route take e explorers in the service of the f es. The names which those early explorers gave to e rivers and portages have been almost all retained down to our time. In that Western Sea, of which the Indians spoke, and which they reached by way of the Winnipeg river, which falls into the Lake of the Woods, we recognize Lake Winnipeg.

The Indians who furnished this information were some of those that had taken the trip to the Hudson Bay. There they had seen vessels on the sea, had heard the booming of cannons, had marvelled at the solid construction of the forts; there they had witnessed the flow and the ebb of the tide, which rises for a considerable distance in the rivers around the great Bay. All these details, coming from such a source, caused the French to suspect that the Sea of the West could not be very far from Lake Superior. It required a great many years to undeceive them on that

point. The route followed by the Indians was by way of the Winnipeg river, Lake Winnipeg and Nelson river.

In the year 1717, M. de la Nouë was sent to the Kaministiquia, there to erect a Fort, which he did and which Fort he occupied until 1721. During his sojourn at that Fort he invited all the Indians of the West to visit him and to give him information concerning their country. As usual, the information thus given by the Indians was far from being exact. On his return to Quebec de la Nouë wrote the governor that all he had learned of certain, regarding the North-West, "was that the cold there was excessive, and that it was impossible to raise any grain there."

Experience has since taught us that this latter piece of information was absolutely false, for the North-West is now recognized as the granary of America. As to the cold, it is not more severe than in the northern parts of Europe, that for long centuries, have been inhabited and cultivated. "However," says de la Nouë in his report, "it is the section that furnishes the best furs and that constitutes the entire trade of the English at Hudson Bay." To prevent the Indians from going there, it would be necessary to establish a post at *Takimamiwen*, which is three hundred miles from Kaministiquia, and upon the lands situated on the shores of the lake that bears that name. (1)

Since, then, the country west of Lake Superior to the Lake of the Woods, had been known for forty years, when de la Vérendrye undertook to seek out the Western Sea, that sea, or Ocean that so many navigators and trav-

(1) This Indian name, Taki-mamiwen, is a corruption of two Cree words: *Tabi Kimiwen*, "it always rains." Thence comes Rainy Lake.

ellers had vain sought to discover, how comes it that no person in Can da had dared to push an expedition into that region? They contented themselves with making reports to the King of France, concerning the immense advantages tha his country would derive from the fur-trade — so abu dant in that region; but the officers in the King's service n Canada limited their zeal to the fabrication of such re orts.

If an ambiti ame associated with a great undertak to carry the same to a successful issu ing in the French colony to hazard n enterprise; but other qualities were always the handmaids of ambition: a noney, a great amount of energy, ph ce calculated to overcome the obsta nted, and to withstand the persecution red; bu, above all, the lofty motive of king. These are some of the requisites e entirely. or in part, wanting in the men who would have gladly immortalized themselves by the discovery of the Western Ocean.

The King of France would not contribute anything from his treasury to aid in any way, whatsoever, a North-West expedition.

The French officers who served in the colony were first of all anxious to do their own little business, while doing that of the king, to a certain extent. In France, they scarcely imagined the enormous expenses that those discoveries entailed and, we may add, that at a period when the Court was more concerned in its own pleasures than in the extension of the colonies, they cared far less about them.

Yet, the time had arrived, in the wise plans of the Pro-

vidence, when the beams of faith should be made to illuminate the countless hordes of infidels scattered over the untrodden wilds of this northern land. Then it was that God infused into the heart of a noble Canadian —Sieur Pierre Gaulthier de Varennes de la Vérendrye, a native of Three-Rivers — the heroic resolution of attempting, at his own expense, and at the risk of his fortune and the future of his family, the discovery of the West.

CHAPTER II.

SUMMARY.

M. de la Vérendrye; his determination to attempt the discovery of the North-West.— His departure from Montreal. — His arrival at Lake Superior. — The Great Portage. — Delay experienced at that point. — Establishment of Fort Saint-Pierre, by M. de la Jemmeraie, at Rainy Lake. — Losses sustained by M. de la Vérendrye during the winter. — Return of the expedition to Rainy Lake, in the spring of 1732. — De la Vérendrye continues his voyage.; he reaches the Lake of the Woods and builds Fort Saint-Charles

Pierre Gaulthier de Varennes de la Vérendrye, the son of René Gaulthier de Varennes, was born at Three-Rivers, in 1686. He was in his fortieth year when he formed the determination of going to discover the country west of the Great Lake Superior. When eighteen years of age — in 1704 — he had taken part in a campaign in the New England colonies, and again, in the following year, he joined another one. On his return to Three-Rivers, being possessed of a military taste, he entered the service of France, and crossed over to Europe. In 1709, he took part in the battle of Malpaquet, and there received nine wounds. After having spent a few years in the French army, he returned to Canada, and in 1728 held command at the Nipigon post on the shores of Lake Superior. It was while there that he gleaned his first information regarding the great regions of the West.

In 1730, he went down to Montreal to communicate his plans to the Governor, M. de Beauharnois, by whom they were approved. During the winter of 1730-1731, he

made arrangements with the merchants who were to furnish him with goods, for the purposes of fur-trading with the Indians. He hired his men, and in the springtime started from Montreal, taking along with him his three sons, his nephew, M. de la Jemmeraie and fifty men to paddle the canoes and carry the baggage. (1)

Although the number of men engaged for the expedition is not mentioned in de la Vérendrye's diary, still there can be no doubt on that point, for we find in several letters addressed to the concerning the discovery of the North tempt in that direction necessitated at the start. (2)

De la Véren ed partnership with a few merchants in bearing the cost of the enterprise.

"I associated th me," he wrote, "so as to more ea meet the expenditure that the enterp and, in passing Michillimacinac, I took the Jesuit F. er Messaiger as our missionary."

Like all the discoverers of new countries in America, de la Vérendrye wished to have a priest with him. Those men of strong faith never set out upon distant expedi-

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(1) M. de la Jemmaraie, who accompanied de la Vérendrye was the brother of the Venerable Mother d'Youville, foundress of the community of the Grey Nuns of Montreal.

(2) In a memorandum addressed by the French King to the Marquis of Vaudreuil, in 1717, His Majesty approved of the project of establishing trading posts at Kaministiquia, Rainy Lake and the Lake of the Woods. "To realize that undertaking," said he, "it is necessary to have fifty good men (voyageurs), of whom twenty-four will occupy the three trading posts and the other twenty-six will be employed in explorations, from the Lake of the Woods to the Western Ocean."

tions without placing themselves under the ægis of religion and having a missionary accompany them.

To form an idea of the difficulties of travel in those wild countries at that period, it will suffice to say, that despite all the diligence exercised by the explorers, it took seventy-eight days to traverse the distance between Montreal and Thunder Bay, on the north shore of Lake Superior. In our time we can cover the same distance in two days, by the Canadian Pacific Railway.

"On the 26th August," says de la Vérendrye, "we arrived at the Grand Portage at Lake Superior, which is forty-five miles from Kaministiquia."

The Kaministiquia river flows into Lake Superior, near Port Arthur.

It was from this point (the Grand Portage) that the travellers were to leave the Lake, and to venture into the unknown lands of the interior. From that point of departure there were ten miles of portage before reaching a navigable river.

These portages, for which we have no expression equivalent in English, are places where navigation is interrupted by rapids, or falls, or orther like obstacles, and over which the canoes, provisions and entire paraphernalia must be carried on the back, until the next navigable stretch of water is reached. A long portage is always a formidable drudgery for the *voyageur*.

De la Vérendrye's men, who were already weary from their long journey, were scared when he proposed to undertake the passage of the Grand Portage. Here is how he tells of the unfortunate misadventure that befell him at that point.

"On the 27th August, all our men being terrified at the length of the portage, which is nine miles (three leagues)

long, mutinied, and all asked to relinquish (the expedition). But, with the help of our missionary Father, I found a way to gain over a few, out of the number of my employees, to go with my nephew, who was my lieutenant, and my son to establish a trading post at Rainy Lake. I secured a sufficient number to equip four canoes. I gave them a good guide and had them make the portage at once.

"I was obliged to stop at Kaministiquia, which caused me a real as to the payment of my employees ls with which I was charged, without ving any benefit from all such costs, v able."

(*Mémoires o lrye.*)

As we have s ll the route from Lake Superior to the ds had been explored several years b a Vérendrye speak of any discoveries that part of the country. He sends his son and his nephew to Rainy Lake, as to a place well known already, to there build a Fort that might serve as a first depot.

M. de la Jemmeraie happily reached Rainy Lake, with all his men, in sufficient time before the winter, to build a Fort, which he called Fort Saint-Pierre.

During the winter he entered into communication with the Indians, inviting them to come and trade their furs with the French; but as the arrival of these strangers was not known early enough, the Indians only came in small numbers to the Fort.

In the spring, de la Vérendrye's son returned to the Grand Portage to give an account to his father of the work done at Rainy Lake. He reached Lake Superior on the 29th May, bringing with him a few furs — a poor

compensation for the losses sustained by his father during the previous autumn.

"When the canoes, which I had sent to the interior arrived," says de la Vérendrye, "I sent my son to Michillimacinac to fetch the small amount of fur that was coming to me, and to bring with him the goods that should have come to me from Montreal."

On the 8th June, de la Vérendrye set out with all his following, fully determined to push the expedition as far as his means and strength would allow.

He took good care, all along the route, to put in order the portages over which he would have to pass again.

On the 14th July, he reached Fort Saint-Pierre. This Fort was built at the outlet of Rainy Lake. There fifty canoes, manned by Indians, awaited to accompany the discoverers onward.

De la Vérendrye only stopped at the Fort sufficiently long to examine the works done, and to take a fresh supply of provisions; he then continued on his way, escorted by the Indian canoes.

In the month of August, the explorers entered the great Lake of the Woods, which the Indians called the Lake of the Islands, on account of the multitude of islands that it contains. They coasted along the south shore of the lake, then turned westward towards the mouth of a small river that flows into the lake at a point known to-day as the North-West Angle. De la Vérendrye considered that spot a suitable place for the construction of a Fort.

According to a letter of Father Auneau, who spent the winter of 1735 at the Fort, it was built on that little river, three miles from its mouth. (Letter of Father Auneau, 1735). That second Fort was called St. Charles. De la

Vérendrye's plan was to constitute that place his base of operations between the East and the West.

His son, whom he had sent to Michillimacinac, did not return until the 12th November. The ice had already taken upon the lake; the escort had to leave the canoes thirty miles from the Fort, and to carry the provisions and merchandise for trading purposes on their backs. This first disappointment experienced at Fort St. Charles was destined to be followed by many others. De la Vérendrye had selected that Fort as the centre of his operations between the East and the West, and, in the designs of Providence, it was to be the scene of his most bitter sorrows and most cruel trials.

CHAPTER III.

SUMMARY.

De la Vérendrye's plans for the spring of 1733.— De la Jemmeraie goes down to Montreal. — Father Messaiger returns. — De la Vérendrye's disappointment on being deceived by his suppliers. — Momentary impossibility to continue his discoveries. — His eldest son is sent down the Maurepas river, to there build a fort.— Death of De la Jemmeraie.

In the spring of 1733, de la Vérendrye had formed the design of going to build a fort in the neighborhood of Lake Winnipeg. The northern tribes persuaded him to this course; moreover, it was the sole means of drawing the fur trade to the French and of preventing the Indians from going to the Hudson Bay. He desired to put his plan into immediate execution, but his council advised him, before pushing his explorations further west, to await the return of the canoes that had been sent to Michilimacinac. During that time, de la Vérendrye sent his nephew, de la Jemmeraie, to Montreal, to render an account to the governor of the works already done, of the friendly manner in which he had been received by the Indian tribes and of the additional information, concerning the West, that they had given him.

Father Messaiger, feeling severely the effects of the rigorous climate, returned with de la Jemmeraie to Montreal.

The canoes sent to Michillimacinac were to have brought back merchandise for trading purposes; on these did de la Vérendrye depend to recoup himself for his ex-

penditure and t) place himself in a position to continue his exploration.

Unhappily, r atters did not go as well as he had anticipated. In the spring of 1733 only one empty canoe reached Fort St Charles. The news that it brought was bad. The guai lians left there, by those interested in the enterprise, to t ke care of the provisions and trade with the Indians, ha spent everything, and it was now necessary that they utumn season to equip the other canoe

These latter St. Charles until September, and eve)oorly supplied. This vexatious disap impossible for de la Vérendrye to d the plan of discovery. He spent, with inter of 1733-1734, at Fort St. Charle

The Assinib renewed their request to have a fort b hood, de la Vérendrye sent his eldest son, in the beginning of March, down the river Maurepas, to explore the country and to select a suitable place for a fort.

His son returned from that expedition on the 27th May, 1734.

Seeing the bad turn things had taken, de la Vérendrye decided to go down to Montreal. He placed everything in order, at Fort St. Charles, and commissioned his son to go with three well-supplied canoes to build Fort Maurepas, as soon as de la Jemmeraie, who was to have charge of Fort St. Charles, during the absence of de la Vérendrye, had returned.

De la Vérendrye reached Montreal on the 25th August, 1734. He gave an account of the establishments he had created, and of his hopes for the future; he acquainted

the Governor with all the advantages the colony would derive from his discoveries, and of all the honor that would redound to France. His exposition of the subject won him a most favorable reception and the honor of fresh orders to continue his discoveries. On the 6th June, 1735, he again set out from Montreal and reached Fort St. Charles on the 6th September.

He found the place completely destitute. Provisions had run out. The high waters had destroyed the crop of wild rice, which was, at least, an important item. The Indians suffered as well as the French from that famine, and it forced them to go back into the woods to hunt for a means of livelihood.

At once, on his arrival, de la Vérendrye sent his nephew to his eldest son at Fort Maurepas.

"I fitted him out," he says, "with what I had brought with me for my discoveries, in the hope that those interested therein would return me the advances I had made them."

Before leaving Montreal, de la Vérendrye had given his suppliers the trading and business of the posts that he established.

Father Messaiger, who had returned to Montreal on account of his health, was replaced, in 1735, by another Jesuit, Father Auneau, who left Montreal with de la Vérendrye.

For a long time, at the Red River, those who spoke about the voyages of de la Vérendrye, were under the impression that the first missionary to reach Winnipeg was Father Messaiger. We have just seen that he did not go beyond the Lake of the Woods. No more did his successor, Father Auneau, ever see the Red River.

On going up from Montreal to Fort St. Charles, de la

Vérendrye had preceded the canoes that carried the merchandise and provisions. He expected them early in the fall for the trading business and for the feeding of his men. But, on account of the bad management of the leader, their canoes only went as far as the Grand Portage, a mishap which reduced the people at Fort St. Charles to a state of famine during the winter.

In the spring of 1736, de la Vérendrye found himself once again stripped of everything. He had sent his two sons and two nephews, Jemmeraie at Fort Maurepas. On the 4th June two sons came back to Fort St. Charles with news of the death of de la Jemmeraie. It was a hard blow for de la Vérendrye. His nephew had been one whom he most relied for assistance; his lieutenant, and confided all the forts.

At Fort St. Charles provisions were almost exhausted, and famine stared them in the face. In order not to expose his men to death by hunger, he sent, in all haste, three canoes to Michillimacinac to secure food.

Father Auneau, who had spent the winter at Fort St. Charles went, with that expedition. At the request of the missionary, de la Vérendrye allowed his eldest son to go with them.

They started on the 8th June, 1736, and camped, the first night, on an island some twenty-one miles from the Fort.

As the Indians had so far never evidenced any hostile sentiment towards the French, the little band of travellers did not take any precautions to guard their encampment during the night.

However, a band of Indians, consisting of five Sioux of the prairies, and a dozen of Sioux of the woods, had

watched them all day. When night fell, they landed on the island, and, under the veil of darkness, massacred the entire little company.

On the 23rd August, two canoes of Indians that carried letters to M. Legardeur de Saint-Pierre, at Sioux Fort on the Mississippi, told the story of the massacre. (1)

De la Vérendrye spent the summer at Fort St. Charles. In the fall he received only very poor assistance for the winter, so that when the spring of 1737 came, he was without even the necessaries of life. He, therefore, resolved to go down again to Montreal.

"I started on the 6th June," he says, "and arrived in Montreal on the 24th August. I went to pay my respects to the General, and gave him the reasons that forced me to come down. He was kind enough to approve of them and did me the honor to continue his orders for the prosecution of the discovery with which I had been intrusted."

De la Vérendrye did not leave for the West again until the following spring (1738). He started on the 18th June, after having taken all the means necessary for the continuation of his enterprise. He reached Fort St. Charles on the 2nd September. During his absence, his two sons had guarded the Fort. By their skillful and tactful course, they had won the friendship of the Indians.

A fact worthy of note, and which has not escaped the attention of the historians, is the kindly feeling of the American Indians for the French and the Canadians, which sprang up the moment there was any intercourse between them.

(1) It is by this letter, of M. de Saint-Pierre, that it became known how and by whom the French under de la Vérendrye were massacred.

The Indians admitted that their friendship for the French was due to the fact that they recognized their great sincerity, and saw in them faithful and generous friends. Our Canadian trappers have always been well liked by the Indians. For them the word "French" meant "Friend."

Tribes that were at enmity with each other sought to remain allies of the French; these poor children of the woods expected neither silver nor presents in return; they felt sufficiently honored by the friendship alone.

On the other hand, wherever the English found their way into the North-West they became at once objects of Indian antipathy. I do not state this to hurt the feelings of a race, but simply to establish a fact, which a quarter of a century of observation in the North-West has taught me. I have frequently questioned old *voyageurs* on this subject; I have read, moreover, a great number of histories dealing with the relations between the English and the Indians and, in each case, these stories and histories have served to convince me that the Indian does not like the English.

This same sentiment is still to be found amongst the Indians of Manitoba.

It is quite probable that the missionary priests, whom the early French discoverers always had with them and who evidence a deep interest in the Indians, had largely contributed to this gaining over of the aborigines to the French.

CHAPTER IV.

SUMMARY.

Departure of de la Vérendrye for Fort Maurepas. — Discovery of the Red River and of the Assiniboine. — Construction of Fort La Reine. — Journey into the country of the Mandans. — Return to Fort La Reine.

After his return from Montreal, de la Vérendrye thought of taking advantage of the fine autumn days to advance farther into the interior.

At the request of the Indians, he left his two sons at Fort St Charles and, having put everything in order there, started with six well-equipped canoes for Fort Maurepas, which he reached on the 23rd September. All that section of the country had already been explored, in 1734, by de la Vérendrye's son. In 1735, de la Jemmeraie had been sent to winter there; there it was that he died and was buried.

At present, the spot occupied by Fort Maurepas is well known; it is on the north bank of the Winnipeg river, not far from the mouth. Would it not be proper to erect, at least, a simple cross to the memory of that illustrious Canadian who had partaken of the labors of the one who discovered the Red River and who died at the task? His name, now too rarely recalled, would well deserve to be embalmed in history and to be carved on a monument.

De la Vérendrye remained only one day at Fort Maurepas; on the morrow of his arrival he continued his march towards the mouth of the Red River.

This river w s then called the river of the Assiniboines. The Assiniboin River of to-day was looked upon as the principal strear of which the Red River was but a tributary. De la V rendrye was guided by Indians. Their canoes ascend l the numerous windings of that river, which seemed o constantly turn back in the direction whence it cam

It was towar s the last days of September that the discoverer of the in front of the place where to-day r of Winnipeg and the smaller town here, where a century later, a relative adian, Mgr Alexandre Taché, was to name by a life of sacrifice in the glo ading the blessings of Christian civil unututored tribes of those vast terr

De la Véren ssiniboine as far as the place where to wn of Portage de la Prairie. On th October, he and all his following landed and commenced the construction of a fort wherein to spend the winter. He called it Fort La Reine.

For a long time, the historians of the Red River were uncertain as to the site of that Fort, but there is now no longer any doubt that it was built at Portage de la Prairie; (1) de la Vérendrye says so in his diary.

"My fourth Fort," he says, "is Fort La Reine, on the north bank of the Assiniboine River. (2).

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(1) Several thought that it was at the mouth of the *Souris* River. De la Vérendrye called it *Fort de la Reine*, but we use the shorter expression of Parkman and others — *Fort La Reine.*

(2) De la Vérendrye calls this the river of the Assiniboëls.

"From Fort La Reine there is a nine mile portage leading to Lac des Prairies." The "Lac des Prairies," of which de la Vérendrye speaks, is our Lake Manitoba.

The name Manitoba was given to it by the Assiniboine Indians, who lived along its shores at the time of the discovery of that country. The explorers got the names of the lakes and rivers along their route from the Indians; they wrote them down in their diaries just as they heard them pronounced, or else, they translated them into French.

In our days, it has been claimed and sustained that the name Manitoba comes from two Indian words, *Manito, Wapan.* This is, however, not at all certain and no person could establish the contention in a satisfactory manner. I would like to know by what transmutation *Manito Wapan* could be changed into *Manitoba.* It was not the Sauteux Indians, themselves, that could have changed the name, which belonged to their own language; certainly, they would have continued to pronounce it Manito Wapan. Might it have been the French that made the change? Not at all likely, for they retained a great number of Indian names that are harder to pronounce than Manito Wapan. In de la Vérendrye's diary, we find perfectly conserved such names as *Missilimakinaw, de Kaministigoya, Winipigon, Takamamiwen.* (1)

Why, then, distort *Manito Wapan* into *Manitoba?*

The Indians, that inhabited the shores of Lake Manitoba and the banks of the Assiniboine at the time of the discovery, were of the Assiniboine tribe, whose language

(1) Although these names are thus written in de la Vérendrye's diary, the translater spells them as do the English historians, and as they are written on the map to-day.

resembles that of the Sioux. There were the *Mata toba,* the *Hic toba* and the *Ti toba* tribes. The terminal "toba," in their language, means "prairie," and the word "mine" means "water." *Mi ne sota* means *yellow water; mine apolis* means *city of the waters.*

Mine toba means *water of the prairies,* or else *Lake of the Prairies.* The English, who came into the country after the French, pronounced *mine* like *my ni;* hence Manitoba. De la Vérendrye in calling — in his diary — Manitoba the [illegible], did nothing else than simply translate

Besides, this [illegible]ly be called the Lake of the Prairies, [illegible]where the Great Spirit speaks."

During a lon[illegible] was assigned to the word Canada, [illegible]belong to it. It was said that it ca[illegible] words, *piko anata,* which mean *with[illegible]* it has been discovered that the word *Canaaa* is an Iroquois expression, which means a heap, or a *group of huts.* Very natural, indeed, would be this explanation, since the country was inhabited by the Iroquois. In a like manner *Manitoba* is of Assiniboian origin, for the country there, at the time of its discovery, was inhabited by the Assiniboines. In vain do they attempt to make it spring from *Manito Wapan.*

On the 8th October, two canoes, that had remained behind and were manned by a dozen *voyageurs,* arrived at Fort La Reine; the Sieur de la Marque and his brother were in one of these canoes. They had come with the intention of following de la Vérendrye amongst the Indians of the West.

Although the season was already well advanced (for, in

those northern countries the winter frequently begins in November), de la Vérendrye resolved to go and visit the Mandans, a numerous and important tribe that lived on the banks of the Missouri, south-west from Fort La Reine.

He left, accompanied by twenty Frenchmen, of whose number were de la Marque and his son. They also took four Indians as guides.

De la Vérendrye declares that he and his crew had to undergo numberless hardships before reaching the Mandans. All who are acquainted with the North-West know how imprudent it is to undertake a long journey there at such a season. The Red River people dreaded long journeys over the prairies in November. The hunters, who were well accustomed to the climate, often came near perishing amidst the terrific snowstorms that, in the commencement of the winter, sweep over those expanses.

De la Vérendrye's following increased along the way. A large village of Assiniboine Indians had joined them. The curiosity of those Indians was stirred up at the sight of the white men, whom they then saw for a first time; but their hopes of plunder, or, at least, of presents from the new-comers, was the principal motive that actuated them in following the expedition.

De la Vérendrye had brought a casket or sack with him, filled with trinkets to use as presents to the Mandans, for the purpose of gaining their good will. But, on the very day of their arrival at the Mandan camp, an Assiniboine Indian, who had discovered the treasure, stole it and ran away to the prairies. That theft caused de la Vérendrye considerable loss under the circumstances. The Assiniboines, who had followed him, also cleared out and went

after the robber in order to have a share of his plunder. (1) With them went the interpreter who had been richly paid in advance. All these trials so discouraged the discoverers that they determined, despite the severity of the season, to return to Fort La Reine.

De la Vérendrye left two Frenchmen with the Mandans, to learn their language and to secure information about the country and the peoples that inhabited it.

Although in a great state of suffering, de la Vérendrye set out with his following to return to Fort La Reine. He had hoped to feel better on the way, but the reverse was the case.

He travelled during the month of January, the most severe month of the year. He did not reach Fort La Reine until the 11th February (1739), after having undergone all the sufferings and hardships that it were ever possible for a man to endure — without dying.

(1) This is an evidence that the Indians had their politics as have the whitemen and that they knew the value of boodle.

CHAPTER V.

SUMMARY.

Fresh requests of the Indians to have forts further West. — Civilization makes the Indians more exacting. — Hesitation of de la Vérendrye as to the direction to take on leaving Fort La Reine. — He sends his sons to explore the country around the Lake of the Prairies. — His suppliers send him no merchandise for trading purposes. — He returns to Montreal.

According as de la Vérendrye advanced into the interior of the country, the more distant Indians came in deputations to meet him and to ask for the construction of new forts in their neighborhood. After Fort St. Pierre and Fort St. Charles, Fort Maurepas was built, and then Fort La Reine. Now, the tribes from the shores of the Lake of the Prairies wanted to have one nearer to their territory, that is to say, on the shores of that same lake.

For over a century, all the Indians of the North and the West were in the habit of going yearly to the Hudson Bay to sell their furs to the English traders. Although the journey was a long and wearisome one, they undertook it with pleasure, for they commenced, since their acquaintance with the white men, to feel the need of the goods that they then procured. They never dreamed of any better condition of things until the arrival of the French at Lake Superior. The first forts built to the west of Lake Superior saved the Indians a tramp of nine hundred miles. Their position was becoming improved. Indians and all as they were, they felt the benefits of that amelioration, and they were far from being indifferent thereto.

Although Fort ,a Reine was only a dozen miles from the Lake of the P airies, the Assiniboines considered their condition miser ble, unless they could have a fort on the shores of the la e itself. In this world all things — good and evil — are relative.

One day, in 850, a missionary at one of the forts saw an Indian, app rently in great distress, coming towards him. He imag ned that the native was either ill, or else suffering from xtreme hunger — something not unusual amongst the In

"How are yo onary, "you look sick."

"Ah!" replie a sigh, "I am to be greatly pitied t

"How so: ha at?"

"Yes, I have I am in need of mustard."

He had seen make use of mustard, and he believe gredient absolutely indispensable for a chief, or leader.

The Hudson Bay Company claimed that the multiplication of forts was an injury both to the Indians and to the trade; that is to say, from their point of view.

In any case, de la Vérendrye, in order to meet the desires of the Indians and to learn more about the country, sent his eldest son to explore the region around the Lake of the Prairies. The latter set out on the 10th April: he had instructions to proceed to the mouth of the Paskoyac river, of which the Indians had spoken, and to there select the most favorable places for the erection of a couple of forts— one on the shore of the lake and the other at the mouth of the river. (1)

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(1) The mouth of the Paskoyac river is fifty miles south-east of Fort Cumberland.

The elder de la Vérendrye hesitated as to which direction he should take in the prosecution of his own exploration. Should he continue in the direction of the North-west, or turn to the South-west, or continue on ascending the Assiniboine River?

Since he left Lake Superior there was only one route that he could follow: to either go up or down the rivers that led into the interior; the forests and the mountains forbade all other roads. But once west of the Red River the aspect of the country was entirely changed and it became more difficult to select a course. The vast prairies, level as the sea, presented as many routes to the traveller as does the ocean, itself. No longer any water courses, no longer any valleys to indicate the path. De la Vérendrye's aim, in sending his son to the Paskoyac river, was to learn the nature of the country and to make certain whether or not it would be more advantageous to carry his expedition in that direction.

While awaiting his son's return de la Vérendrye remained at Fort La Reine.

His furnishing partners had promised to send to the Grand Portage, on Lake Superior, supplies for fur-trading and for stocking the forts. On the 27th May, he sent canoes from Fort La Reine to bring up the expected goods. Unfortunately, through an unpardonable neglect on the part of the furnishers, nothing had been sent.

During eighteen days de la Vérendrye's men, almost starved and at the risk of their lives, waited in vain at the Grand Portage.

At last the canoe men, seeing that nothing arrived for them at the Grand Portage, took upon themselves to go down as for as Michillimacinac. On reaching that post, instead of finding an equipment ready for them, they had

their furs seiz[illegible]d by the fur-curer (or stripper), for four thousand poun[illegible]s ($20,000), although he had broken his own word and [illegible]had caused de la Vérendrye, by not sending the goods f[illegible]or trading purposes to the Grand Portage, as he had agre[illegible]d to, an immense amount of loss.

Such conduc[illegible] on the part of the dealers had a most injurious effect u[illegible]pon de la Vérendrye.

Deprived of [illegible]ssistance it became impossible for him to continue his ex[illegible]ts did not contain any more goods w[illegible]ith the Indians. The trinkets that h[illegible]he purpose of drawing the aborigines [illegible]olen in the country of the Mandans, [illegible]rs, after having seized his furs, refus[illegible]ny more merchandise.

If his canoes [illegible]mpty, what was to become of his st[illegible]

His men ap[illegible]dant of Fort Michillimacinac, and r[illegible]l the risks incurred by those who depended entirely, for their livelihood in the interior regions, upon the provisions that the canoes might bring back. But as it was with his permission that the suppliers had seized the furs, he did not appear to be very favorably inclined, and it was only after persistant urging that they succeeded in obtaining a small amount of merchandise for traffic.

The canoes started back for the North-West, and on the 20th October they were again at Fort La Reine.

De la Vérendrye's sons, who had left in April to explore the Lake of the Prairies and the lower part of the Paskoyac river, had carried out their father's instructions and had returned to give him an account of their voyage.

They had found two very suitable places for forts, and would have built them, had the provisions expected from

Montreal been sent. But, for the moment, de la Vérendrye had to renounce all new undertakings. To build forts and have no provisions wherewith to supply them would simply be useless and unprofitable work.

Seeing himself without resources, with a large number of followers to pay and to feed, he decided to go to Montreal and to there explain to the Governor the sad plight in which he was. However, he spent the winter of 1739 at Fort La Reine, and it was only in the spring of 1740 that he set out for Montreal

He reached Michillimacinac on the 16th July. There he secured some goods and sent them up to his children who had remained behind in the woods.

He had given charge of Fort La Reine to one of his sons. He wrote him to go, in the early autumn, to the country of the Mandans, and to take with him the two Frenchmen who had learned their language, and there to secure reliable guides to conduct them to the Western Sea.

His business at Michillimacinac delayed him several days, and it was the end of August when he reached Montreal.

CHAPTER VI.

SUMMARY.

Arrival of de la Vérendrye in Montreal (1740). — The law-suit taken against him.—The Governor of Canada treats him with kindness and gives him his confidence. — He spends the winter at Quebec. — A few reflections upon his work. — Departure for the West in the spring time.

In Montreal, de la Vérendrye learned that an action at law had been instituted against him, on account of the trading posts that he had established. "I," he says, "who abhors them (law-suits), never having had any in my life, I settled at a great sacrifice, being, however, scarcely at all in the wrong." (1)

He does not state what blame was attached to him concerning the trading posts, but very likely he was accused of having needlessly increased their number and thus to have kept back the work of discovery.

Still, in 1740, nine years after the commencement of his explorations, de la Vérendrye had only built four trading posts, and all four were indispensable for the success of the undertaking.

They who subsequently succeeded de la Vérendrye discovered that it was much easier to criticize that man of true genius than it was to carry on the work he had commenced.

The Governor, to whom de la Vérendrye had given a detailed account of his work and of the unnumbered dif-

(1) Memoires of de la Vérendrye.

ficulties that he had to overcome, saw clearly that envy alone loosened he tongues of his accusers. Moreover, he treated him with respect, received him in his home, and testified the greatest confidence in him.

De la Vérendrye spent the winter in Quebec, and in the spring the Governor gave him fresh instructions to continue his discoveries. Once more the plots of his enemies had failed. They had written, to the Court of France, letters full of calumnies against him of spending all his time trading in furs for his own benefit, and of amassing wealth at the expense of France and of the colony.

It may be well to say that the works, destined to contribute to the glory of God and the salvation of souls, are stamped with the seal of predestination. The discovery of the West was destined to be the salvation to the Indians by opening up the way for the apostles of Christianity, the missionaries. Those countless tribes, living heretofore in the night of ignorance were soon to enter the bosom of the Church and to participate in the the benefits of redemption. This alone would suffice to stir up the powers of evil against the instruments that God had selected for the accomplishment of that glorious work.

Christopher Columbus, in discovering the New World, had opened a way for the bearers of the great good news; hence did God permit that the enmity of evil-mind ones should fall upon him. Those envious men, after having pursued him during his lifetime with unrelenting ferocity, continued to calumniate him in death and consigned his name, for centuries, to oblivion.

So will it be with de la Vérendrye. For a century and a half his name will be forgotten, while the great commercial companies which, later on, will develop the wealth of

those vast regions of the West, will not accord to his memory the slightest honor. Worse still, historians will arise who will deny him the glory of having discovered the Red River.

"I am misunderstood," he writes, himself. "I have sacrificed myself with my children, in the service of His Majesty, and for the good of the colony. In the future the advantages that may be the result will be recognized. Besides, does the large number of people, for whom that enterprise was a livelihood, count for nothing?" . . . . .

"In all my misfortunes I have the consolation of knowing that the Governor-General sees through my designs, recognizes my straightforwardness, and continues to do me justice, despite the opposition that is sought to be made thereto."

Not only did de la Vérendrye fail to make a fortune, but in 1740, nine years after his first voyage, he had spent all that he owned, and moreover, had contracted a debt of forty thousand pounds — all this apart from the sorrow he experienced in the loss of his nephew, de la Jemmeraie, who died of privation at Fort Maurepas, and of his sons, who were massacred by the Sioux at the Lake of the Woods, with Father Auneau and a dozen of his faithful French followers.

In the spring of 1741, de la Vérendrye left Montreal, accompanied by a Jesuit missionary, Father Coquart. Since the death of Father Auneau, murdered at the Lake of the Woods, there is no further mention of any priest with de la Vérendrye's expeditions to the North-West.

We have seen that the first missionaries, Fathers Messaiger and Auneau, did not go beyond Fort St. Charles. Father Claude Coquart is the first priest who went as far as the Western prairies and who offered up the Holy

Sacrifice of the Mass on the banks of the Assiniboine river, at Fort La Reine — where to-day stands the town of Portage La Prairie.

However, it was only in 1742 that Father Coquart reached Fort La Reine. At Michillimacinac, the authorities prevented him from going any farther. "Intrigues, arising from jealousy," says de la Vérendrye, "prevented the missionary from continuing his route with us." (*Memoires of la Vérendrye.*)

It may, perhaps, fear the authorities could have of establishment in an Indian country?

It is quite possible that this opposition originated with those who coveted de la Vérendrye's place. Everything that might discredit him was brought into play.

De la Vérendrye left Fort La Reine on the 13th October, 1741. After remaining for a few days at Fort St. Charles, to meet the Indians who were on the warpath. As usual, in order to [illegible] the presents, the Indians made all manner of promises to keep the peace; but they were not slow to break their promises.

While de la Vérendrye was at Quebec, his sons, according to the instructions they had received, had gone to the country of the Mandans with the intention of proceeding to the Western Sea; but having failed to secure guides, they returned to Fort La Reine.

That disappointment obliged de la Vérendrye to turn the course of his operations in another direction. In the autumn of 1741, he sent his eldest son to build Fort Dauphin at the Lake of the Prairies and Fort Bourbon at the Rivière aux Biches. (1) The discoverer thus describes the location of these two forts.

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(1) On Lake Manitoba.

"From Fort La Reine there is a nine mile portage to the north-east, reaching to the Lake of the Prairies. The south side of the lake is followed to the outlet of a river that comes from the great prairies, at the foot of which is Fort Dauphin, the fifth establishment built at the request of the prairie Crees and the canoe Assiniboines. There is a trail from there to Fort Bourbon, which is the sixth establishment. But the road is not advantageous. The custom is, on leaving Fort Maurepas, to pass along the north of Lake Winnipigon to its first strait, where a crossing is made to the south, from island to island, then the land is coasted along to the river *aux Biches,* where Fort Bourbon stands near a lake of the same name. From Fort Bourbon to the Paskoyac river is ninety miles (trente lieues.)" (1)

Two other small forts were built on the Red River by de la Vérendrye's eldest son, one fifteen miles from Lake Winnipeg; the other at the mouth of the Assiniboine; but they were both abandoned on account of their too close proximity to Fort Maurepas and Fort La Reine.

Forts Dauphin and Bourbon were completed during the autumn and winter of 1741 to 1742.

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(1) Parkman spells this name Paskoiac — the translater prefers to retain the author's and de la Vérendrye's spelling. This is the Saskatchewan river of to-day.

CHAPTER VII.

SUMMARY.

Voyage of de la Vérendrye's sons to the Rocky Mountains. — Discovery of the Mountains on the 1st January, 1743. — Return to Fort La Reine. —Establishment of a Fort at the Paskoyac river. — Recall of the Chevalier de la Vérendrye to Montreal. — De la Verendrye, senior, replaced in the North-West by M. de Noyelles. — The Chevalier returns to the West in 1747. — The Governor again intrusts de la Vérendrye with the explorations.

In the spring of 1742, de la Vérendrye's two sons and two Frenchmen (four travellers in all), set out from Fort La Reine for the land of the Mandans, with the intention of following up their expedition as far as the Western Sea. (1)

They commenced their journey on the 29th April, 1742, and, on the 19th May, twenty-two days after their departure, they reached the banks of the Mississippi, where that tribe lived.

It is not easy to give the precise route taken by them from that place to the Rocky Mountains, nor to say at what point of that range they touched after their eight long months of travel.

According to their day-journal, they seemed to constantly have turned to the south-west and west-south-

(1) By the Western Sea is meant the Pacific Ocean. Earlier in this work there is mention of the sea in the West, which was the name that the Indians gave to Lake Winnipeg. But de la Vérendrye refers to the Western Ocean, which so long had been sought for, as the highway to China.

west. The his rian Parkman says that very probably they first sighte the white crests of the Rockies at a place called Big Hor Range, one hundred and twenty miles to the west of ellow Stone Park.

They did no meet with any hostile Indians on their way. The len h of time taken in that great tramp was due to the fact hat they found it very difficult to secure guides.

It was on th that they first caught sight of the m ld have liked to have climbed to the t a look at the sea — as they hoped — ho had gone willingly so far, refused "because," they said, "the fierce tribe they now were would not fail to mas

It was not w at they found themselves forced s. After a march of twelve days th , which Mr. Edmond Mallet, of Was to be the site of the town of Helena, Montana.

Then, turning towards the south, the travellers passed Musselshell, where they met the Flat Heads. They crossed the Yellow Stone as far as the Windy River, near Fremont Peak (in Wyoming), where the Snake Indians told them about the Green River on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, and the Windy River, which is a tributary of the western Colorado flowing into the Gulf of California.

On the 19th March, having got back to the Upper Missouri, they took possession of the country in the domain of a tribe called the Choke-Cherry Indians. The 2nd July, 1743, they were again back at Fort La Reine. Their journey had lasted fourteen months.

The long absence of his sons caused de la Vérendrye considerable anxiety concerning their fate; and great was his joy when he met them once more.

De la Vérendrye at once wrote to the Marquis de Beauharnois, giving him an account of that trip and thus proving to him that the jealous-minded people, who had accused the discoverer of spending his time trading with the Indians, were calumniators. Unfortunately, those calumnies were believed at the Court, for, despite the immense services that de la Vérendrye had rendered to France, neither he nor his sons ever received any promotion.

Le Marquis de Beauharnois, who was favorable to de la Vérendrye and who was able to fully appreciate his devotedness and that of his sons, hastened to send de la Vérendrye's memorandum to the colonial Minister and to add thereto the following letter:

"27th October, 1744.

"I have the honor to send you herewith the diary which the Sieur de la Vérendrye's son sent me on the occasion of the journey he took to the land of the Mandans to continue the search for the Western Sea, in accordance with the orders and instructions of the Sieur de la Vérendrye, and whereof I had the honor of giving you an account last year. Although he has not yet attained the object he had in view, it does not appear, Monseigneur, that he was at all negligent in the diligence that he should have brought to bear, and he flatters himself with the hope that you will so judge, should you be good enough to attach due importance to the obstacles that he had to surmount, be it in obtaining the friendship of the nations

heretofore unv ited, or in making use of them, as was necessary, in orde to secure from them the information and the assistance n eded in such an enterprise.

"This officer Monseigneur, appears to me to be in the last stage of d tress on account of the attempts made to attribute to the urity of his motives in following up this discovery a ch acter entirely opposite to that which animated him. I vill not take the liberty of entering into details concern might justify his conduct; but I can estimonies that appear to be due him, this discovery-expedition, he did onl y by the establishment of numerous p t unvisited, which today furnish us beaver and other fur, which the En d — and without that such establishn to His Majesty; that the idea forme h that he accumulated in these places ce of the indigence in which he is; that, as I can assure you, Monseigneur, without any favor or predilection for him, the twelve years which he spent at these posts only brought him about 4,000 pounds, which is all he possesses, or all that may remain to him after he has paid the debts that he contracted for the carrying on of that undertaking; in fine, Monseigneur, affairs in the condition in which he has left them seem to be well worthy of your kindness in his regard. It is, also, in the hope which I possess that you will accord him the same, that I beg of you, Monseigneur, to give him a tangible evidence of your confidence, by procuring his promotion at the first convenient opportunity.

"I know of no reason why he should have merited the mortification which he has experienced in not being promoted, and I can only attribute it to your having overlook-

ed, Monseigneur, the proposal I had the honor of making to you regarding the Sieur de la Vérendrye as the oldest of the King's lieutenants, and as a subject who seems to me to be the most worthy of his grace. In fact, Monseigneur, six years of service in France, thirty-two in the colony, without any blame — at least I know of none that could be attributed to him — and nine wounds on his body, are motives that would not allow me to hesitate in proposing him to you for one of the vacant commands; and if I had reason, Monseigneur, to think that you were persuaded that I placed on the list of my officers only men capable of good service and deserving of your bounty, in a particular manner did I draw your attention, in the hope of favor to the Sieur de la Vérendrye.

"I am with deep respect, Monseigneur, your very humble and very obedient servant,

"BEAUHARNOIS."

Despite this high recommendation, calumny had worked its way so well, that we will soon see de la Vérendrye and his sons completely despoiled of the fruits of their labors.

A few Indian tribes, from the banks of the Saskatchewan, still continued to take their furs to the English at Hudson Bay, even after the construction of Forts Dauphin and Bourbon.

The English had made use of all manner of means to turn the Indians against the French. A memoire sent by the Chevalier de la Vérendrye to Mgr Rouillé, the colonial minister, shows that officers, employed at the Hud-

son Bay posts, went so far as to offer money to the Indians to make war upon de la Vérendrye's traders.

If the French competed with the English in the fur-trading business, on their side, it was always a loyal endeavor in which they respected the rights of each one and the laws of nations. To benefit by the trade with the Saskatchewan Indians, de la Vérendrye sent his eldest son to build a fort at the mouth of the Paskoyac river. The latter sought, at the same time, to efface from the minds of the Indians the bad impressionss that the English had left upon them concerning the French; he invited them to come, without any dread, to trade with the French, and he succeeded in re-establishing a confidence in them. He returned to spend the balance of the winter at Fort La Reine.

In the spring of 1745, de la Vérendrye's eldest son was recalled to Montreal by the Marquis de Beauharnois, who gave him a commission in the army under the command of M. de Saint-Pierre.

The same year, the Rev. Father Claude Coquart, who had been three years in the woods of the West, returned to Montreal, and from that time till 1750, there is no mention of any missionary with de la Vérendrye's people.

In 1746, de la Vérendrye, being again the victim of calumnies, was obliged to return to Montreal.

He was replaced by M. de Noyelles who does not appear to have gone farther than Lake Superior.

After the departure of de la Vérendrye and his eldest son, the Indians ceased frequenting the French forts, and took the way once more to the Hudson Bay.

Until 1747, the Chevalier de la Vérendrye was constantly kept in service under the command of M. de Saint-Pierre, in order to prevent him from having sufficient leis-

ure to return to the posts in the West, while his father remained in Quebec to answer the accusations of his enemies.

In 1747, he led a campaign against the Agniers who had taken prisoners almost at the gates of Montreal. After that campaign, in which he had greatly distinguished himself, he was allowed to go back to the Forts to reestablish order there, for the Indian tribes had been on the war path ever since the departure of M. de la Vérendrye.

Before he left for the West, he received the shoulder-knot as a reward and in recognition of his services to the colony.

On reaching Michillimacinac, he met de Noyelles who sought to turn him from his undertaking, on the pretense that it was unsafe to go amongst the Indians when they were on the war-path. However, after a time, he resolved to reach the trading posts, which he did, but not without much trouble,— but he found no Indians there.

In order to meet them he was obliged to go to their camps, where he succeeded in persuading them to return to the French.

Already had the English of the Hudson Bay given them Indians collars (neck-laces), to induce them to make war on de la Vérendrye's people and to wipe out all the Frenchmen. (*Mémoire of the Chevalier de la Vérendrye.*)

The Chevalier spoke to them of his father's goodness towards the Indian tribes and of all the presents he had made them. Touched by his kind words they became more docile and better disposed.

The youngest of his brothers was left with the Indians at Fort St. Charles, while he returned to Michillimacinac,

where he received, with the orders of M. de la Galissonnière, a promise of a second lieutenant.

Thence he went to Fort La Reine, which he found all fallen in ruins. He had it rebuilt and put in good order, as well as Fort Maurepas which had been burned by the Indians.

The Chevalier de la Vérendrye, after having completed these works, undertook, in accordance with his father's orders, to re-ascend the great Saskatchewan. In the autumn of 1749, with good guides, he succeeded in reaching the confluence of the north and south branches of that river. The Indians called that place Les Fourches (the Forks). There, all the tribes, from the prairies, the forest and the mountains, met in the spring of each year to consult upon questions of the hunt and of trading.

In the spring of 1750, the Chevalier de la Vérendrye, took advantage of this meeting to get more exact information concerning the countries more to the west. He asked came whence came that large river? They all made answer that it came from a great distance, from an elevated region where there were very lofty mountains; that beyond those mountains "there was an immense lake whose waters could not be drunk."

The Chevalier made an alliance with all those tribes; he invited them to come to the French the following year with all their furs and to receive the presents that he intended for them.

The repairing of the Forts and the expenditure caused by those journeys had exhausted all the provisions and merchandise intended for trading purposes. De la Vérendrye's son went down to Michillimacinac to secure fresh supplies, in the expectation of at once going back to the trading posts with his father; but Providence had *otherwise* ordained.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUMMARY.

Death of the Sieur de la Vérendrye. — Sad plight of his sons; they were refused permission to continue his works of discovery. — Legardeur de Saint-Pierre succeeds de la Vérendrye. — His sojourn in the Western trading posts. — His disgraceful conduct towards de la Vérendrye's son. — Nothing is done towards the discovery of the Western sea.

From the day of his arrival in Quebec, in 1746, de la Vérendrye explained and proved to the Government that, with the feeble resources placed at his disposal and the annoyance that envious people unceasingly caused him, it was impossible for him to have pushed his work of discovery more actively than he had done.

Far from being a source of fabulous wealth for him, the undertaking of those explorations menaced the future prospects of his family, the members of which sacrificed their youth and their health in the unprofitable pursuit.

M. de Noyelles, who was sent to the Western trading posts, in 1746, had not been long there when he found that it was much easier to criticise the labors of the discoverer and his sons than it was to continue them. In fact, the very next year he hastened to ask for his recall to Montreal.

De la Vérendrye wrote, from Quebec, to the Minister of Marine, in France, that he had been given to understand, by M. de Beauharnois, that he would have his order to follow up his explorations continued.

"Quebec, 1st November, 1741.

"Monseigneur,

"It is with the liveliest gratitude that I take the liberty of thanking you for the boon you have been good enough to accord me in procuring my promotion. I feel all the value of that favor, which can but increase the emulation and zeal which I have always had for the service.

"The Marquis de Beauharnois, our General, has done me the honor of informing me of his intentions to have me continue the expeditions to discover the Western Sea, as M. de Noyelles has asked to be relieved.

"I assure you, Monseigneur, that I will make every effort to correspond with the confidence he has kindly reposed in me. The knowledge I have of that country, combined with that possessed by my sons, one of whom is at present at that post, will place me in a position to make fresh and still more satisfactory discoveries; at least, it will be no fault of mine, if I do not.

"I beg of you, Monseigneur, to be perfectly assured of the attention I will give to this undertaking, keeping, as I will, more in mind its success than my personal interests, which I would always gladly sacrifice when the King's service is in question.

"I am, with very deep respect,
Monseigneur,
"Your Grace's very humble
"and very obedient servant,

"LA VÉRENDRYE."

As may be seen by this letter, the Marquis de Beauharnois did not allow himself to be deceived by the constantly renewed accusations of the jealous-minded and ambitious ones, but continued to honor de la Vérendrye with his confidence.

In 1747, the Marquis de Beauharnois was recalled to France and was replaced by the Marquis de la Galissonnière. On his arrival the same old accusations against de la Vérendrye were carried to him. But he, like his predecessor, had the good sense not to mind them, as the following letter which he addressed to the Minister of Marine, will show:

"Quebec, 23rd October, 1747.

"Monseigneur,

"I thought better not to answer regarding the subject of the discovery of the Western Sea, being as yet too slightly informed thereon. Merely, it seems to me that what had been told you, regarding the Sieur de la Vérendrye's working more for his own interests than for the discovery, is false, and that further any officer who may be so employed will have to give, of necessity, a portion of his attention to the fur trading, so long as the King does not supply him with the means of support; a thing that probably might not be convenient. But it is not the best way to encourage them to begrudge them a few small profits or to stay their advancement upon such a pretext, as de la Vérendrye claims has been done to him.

"These discovery expeditions entail great expenses, and expose men to greater hardships and dangers than does open warfare.

"The Sieur e la Salle, and de la Vérendrye's son, and so many hers who perished therein constitute sufficient proof of this.

"Moreover, I rely entirely upon what M. de Beauharnois reported to you on the 15th October, 1746.

"I am, with deep respect,
Monseigneur, etc., etc.,

La Galissonnière."

This letter p ct with the Minister of Marine, for, s rendrye was decorated with the Cross his sons, who had remained in the notions. This is how, in a letter date 17th September, 1749, he personally t .

"Monseigneur,

"I take the liberty of offering you my humble thanks for your having procured for me from His Majesty, a Cross of Saint-Louis and for my sons their promotions.

"My zeal, combined with my gratitude, prompts me to start out next spring, honored with the instructions of our General the Marquis de la Jonquière, to continue the establishments and discoveries in the West, which for several years have been interrupted. (1)

"I gave the Marquis de la Jonquière the map and

(1) De la Jonquière had just succeeded de la Galissonnière.

description of that route that I must for the present take. The Count de la Galissonnière has a similar one.

"I will keep a most exact diary of the route from our entrance upon those lands to the furthest points that I and my sons may reach.

"I can only start from Montreal in the month of May next, the season when there is free navigation in the Upper Country.

"I expect to do all that is possible by way of diligence to reach Fort Bourbon for the winter, which is the last — down the river des Biches — of all the Forts that I have established.

"Only too happy would I be, if, after all the hardships, fatigues and risks that I will undergo in that long discovery expedition, could I prove to you my disinterestedness, and my zeal, as well as that of my children, for the glory of the King and the welfare of the colony.

"I am, with deep respect,
"Monseigneur,
"Your very humble and
"very obedient servant,

"LA VÉRENDRYE."

The order to prosecute those discoveries had been given de la Vérendrye by de la Galissonnière, whose views, as he had said, were the same as those of the Marquis de Beauharnois. But de la Galissonnière had only been sent out to the colony while awaiting the coming of de la Jonquière, who had been retained a prisoner in England.

The latter did not reach Canada until 1749, when de la Vérendrye had already commenced to prepare for his departure to the West.

Had de la Jonquière been in the colony two years earlier, it is quite probable, not to say certain, that the commission to prosecute the discoveries would have been given to some person other than de la Vérendrye; but it was hard to withdraw that order from a man of such recognized merit.

The jealous people, who for fifteen years had persistently brought accusations against him without ever having been able to substantiate one of them, had to give in for the moment, and to await a more favourable opportunity to carry out their designs. Unfortunately, that opportunity was not long in coming.

It is well known that de la Jonquière was noted for his sordid avarice; that he was not ashamed, Governor and all as he was, to take a hand in business, and to close up all establishments that might compete with his. The fur trade could not fail to awaken his attention and to stimulate his cupidity. Moreover, he had at hand the very men to serve him and feed his passion for money. A goodly number of the French officers, who then held some of the leading places under the Government, were a regular scourge for the country.

The Intendant Bigot, that infamous extortioner, who robbed everywhere and urged on his friends to pillage, wanted nothing better than companions of his own kind to work for all it was worth the fur trading business.

The Governor and he understood each other to perfection.

All means, with them, were good that helped to fill their coffers, and they knew how to get rid of all those who *might be obs*tacles in the way of their designs.

On the 6th December, 1749, in the very midst of his preparations, de la Vérendrye died suddenly at Montreal; he was only in his sixty-third year, and still full of strength and energy.

At once de la Jonquière notified the Colonial Minister in France of the event and, at the same time, announced to him that he had already confided the continuation of the works of discovery to Legardeur de Saint-Pierre.

"I have the honor," he wrote, "to give you a report of the death of M. de la Vérendrye, Captain at Montreal, which took place on the 6th December.

"As the latter was charged to continue, in person, the expeditions of discovery of the Western Sea, and as it seems to me to be the King's desire that this project should be followed up, I have entrusted M. de Saint-Pierre with the execution of it, and I calculate upon him starting in the early spring. He is the only officer in all the colony who has as much knowledge of that country." (1)

. . . . . .

This statement of de Saint-Pierre's knowledge of the country, that de la Vérendrye had travelled, was a lie invented by the governor to deceive the minister and palliate the odious manner in which he was about to treat de la Vérendrye's sons.

The best evidence that de Saint-Pierre was not the best acquainted man with the Red River country is the fact that he had never been there. Not only was he unacquainted with the country to which the Governor sent him, but he was in no way prepared to carry on the difficult

(1) He probably means "He has more knowledge than any other officer of that country."

work commenced by de la Vérendrye; he was ignorant of the language, the customs and the habits of the tribes with which he was to trade.

Had de la Jonquière been the least interested in the discovery he had simply to do an act of justice to de la Vérendrye's sons by appointing them to continue their father's work.

The Chevalier de la Vérendrye, who, for twenty years, had lived with his father and brothers, amongst the Indian tribes of the West, had traversed the vast prairies to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, was, beyond all question, better qualified than de Saint-Pierre to bring those exploring and discovery expeditions to a successful issue.

Had they the slightest sentiment of honor, the Governor, Bigot and de Saint-Pierre would have blushed with shame to have thus despoiled of their rights men who, during so many years, had sacrificed themselves for France and for the colony.

But in the hearts of those vampires, that sucked the best blood out of the colony of New France, egotism and selfishness alone held sway.

They were only too happy to have got rid of the father to be bothered with the sons. They would not even entrust them with the smallest trading post in the West; the three were ordered to return to Montreal. They would have been embarrassing eye-witnesses, did they remain, of the high-handed trading business that the high-born traders intended to carry on. This conduct towards de la Vérendrye's sons will forever remain as a black spot upon the memory of each of these infamous speculators.

CHAPTER IX.

SUMMARY.

The Chevalier de la Vérendrye's return to Montreal; he asserts his claims to his father's succession. — The Governor is deaf to his entreaties. — His letter to the minister of Marine. — The vile conduct of the Governor, of Bigot, and of de Saint-Pierre towards de la Vérendrye's sons.

To satisfy the greed of Bigot and to fill the coffers of the Marquis de la Jonquière, "there was not enough of gold in all the colony," says a writer of that day.

The rich furs from the West were the Californian gold mines of those days, and the French officers who came to the colony showed more zeal in extracting wealth for themselves from those mines, than in colonizing New France. It was the selfishness and ambition of those men that paved the way to the loss of Canada. Had the Canadian people been obliged for a few years longer to submit to the system that obtained during the last years of the French possession, their attachment for that mother country would not be as great as it is at present. The separation came just in time to prevent our affection from changing to contempt, in view of the injustices perpetrated against us.

The Chevalier de la Vérendrye heard of his father's death on reaching Michillimacinac, to which place he had come down to buy provisions to supply his Forts. Foreseeing that the ambitious ones would seek to oust him from the western trading posts, he went on, in all haste, to Montreal to insist upon his right to his father's succes-

sion. But, already was everything arranged beforehand; his claims were not even listened to. Seeing that any steps he might take in Canada would be useless, and that his fate, as well as that of his brothers, had been decided by the Governor's council, he took upon himself to address the Colonial Minister in France, and to acquaint him with the odious proceedings of de Saint-Pierre in his regard. Here is his letter; a beautiful document that deserves to be quoted in full.

"30th September, 1750.

"Monseigneur,

"I have no course left but to cast myself at your Grace's feet and to trouble you with the recital of my misfortunes.

"My name is La Vérendrye. My deceased father is known here and in France through the discovery of the Western Sea, to which work he consecrated more than fifteen of the years of his life. He travelled, and made us travel — my brothers and I — in a manner calculated to attain the end, whatever it might be, had he been assisted a little more and, above all, had he not been crossed by those who were envious of him. Envy is still here, more than in any place, a passion developed into a fashion and against which there is no safeguard.

"While my father and I were over-doing ourselves in fatigue and expenses, his every step was represented as a step after beavers, his expenditure as squanderings and his statements as lies. *The envy of this country has no half measures;* its principle is to say evil, in the hope that, should half of the wrongs told be believed, it may suffice

to do the harm. Positively, our father being thus treated had the grief of turning back, and of causing us to turn back, more than once for lack of aid and protection. He even sometimes met the censure of the Court, as he was more concerned in his work than in the exactness of the style that described it. He had no share in the promotions given and he yet no less zealous in his undertaking, convinced as he was that sooner or later his efforts would not be without some success, nor would they remain unrewarded.

"While he was most taken up with those good intentions, envy had the upper hand. He saw fully established trading posts, the work of his own hands pass into the hands of others. (1)

"While he was thus checked in his career, the beavers came in abundance to another; but the trading posts, far from multiplying only decreased in numbers, and there being no progress made on the line of discovery worried him more than all.

"At this juncture the Marquis de la Galissonnière arrived in this country, and from out the mass of what was told him, both of good and evil, he judged that a man who had pushed his discoveries at his own cost and expense, without that they ever cost aught to the King, and who had incurred debt to create good establishments deserved a different treatment. A great deal of beaver more in the colony and for the benefit of the *Compagnie des Indes;* four or five trading posts established afar off in the form of forts as strong as could be built in those distant re-

(1) It was de Noyelles who was sent to replace him, and who remained only one year at the trading posts and did not go beyond Michillimacinac.

gions; a large number of Indians that became subjects of the King and of whom some, in the section I commanded, set the example to our resident Indians to strike down the Indians that were attached to England — seem to be real services rendered, independent of the project of discovery begun, and the success of which could neither have been more prompt nor more effective than had it remained in his hands.

"It is true the Marquis de la Galissonnière desired to explain the case, and doubtless he has thus explained it to the Court, since my father, last year, was honored with the Cross of St. Louis, and invited to continuue the work commenced by his children.

"He was getting ready, with a good heart, to set out and he spared nothing to ensure success; he had already purchased and prepared all the merchandise to be used in trading; he inspired me and my brothers with his ardor, when death came, on the 6th of last December, to carry him away.

"Great as may have then been my sorrow, I could never have imagined nor foreseen all that I lost in losing my father. Succeeding, as I did, to his engagements and his duties, I had hoped also to succeed to the same advantages that he enjoyed. I had the honor of at once writing to the Marquis de la Jonquière and informing him that I had recovered from an illness that had come upon me, and which might have served as a pretext for some one to supplant me. He replied that he had selected M. de Saint-Pierre to go to the Western Sea. I, thereon, left Montreal, where I was, for Quebec. I explained the position in which my father had left me; that there was more than one trading post at the Western Sea; that my brother and I would be delighted to be under the com-

mand of M. de Saint-Pierre; that we would be satisfied, if needs be, with only one post, and with the most distant post; that even we only asked to be allowed to go on ahead; that in carrying on the discovery we could utilize the last purchases made by our father and what remained in the forts; that, at least, we would thus have the consolation of using our best endeavors to correspond with the views of the Court. The Marquis de la Jonquière, at bay through my persistant representations, at last told me that M. de Saint-Pierre did not want either myself or my brothers. I asked what was to become of our credits. M. de Saint-Pierre settled that: there was nothing coming to me.

"I returned to Montreal with that consoling enlightenment. I sold a small farm, the sole asset of my father's estate, the price of which served to satisfy the most pressing creditors. Still the season was advancing. It became necessary to proceed in the ordinary way to the meeting-place agreed upon with my employees to save their lives and to secure their return — exposed as they were, otherwise, to be robbed and abandoned. I obtained that permission with a grat deal of difficulty, in spite of M. de Saint-Pierre, and only on conditions such as are offered the commonest *voyageur*. Again, scarcely had I set out when de Saint-Pierre complained that my departure did him over ten thousand francs of damage and he accused me of having loaded my canoe beyond what the permission accorded me allowed. The accusation was considered; my canoe was pursued, and had they then caught up to me de Saint-Pierre would have been sooner satisfied.

"He came up with me at Michillimacinac, and if I am to believe him, he was wrong in so acting. He is very

sorry to have neither me nor my brothers with him. He expressed many regrets to me and paid me many compliments. (1)

"Howsoever, such was his proceeding; it would be difficult to find any good faith or humanity in it. M. de Saint-Pierre could have obtained all that he desired, secured his particular interests by advantages that are surprising and have taken a relative with him, without having entirely excluded us.

"M. de Saint-Pierre is an officer of merit, but I am all the more to be pitied in having him thus against me, and with all the good impressions regarding himself that he may have left on many occasions, he would find it hard to show, in this instance, that he had the welfare of the business in view, that he conformed to the wishes of the Court, and that he respected the kindliness with which the Marquis de la Galissonnière honored us. In order to cause us such an injury he must have hurt us very much in M. de la Jonquière's mind. (2)

"I am none the less ruined. My returns, for this year, gathered in only half, and after a thousand difficulties, have completed that ruin. Taking the stopped accounts, both of my father and myself, I find myself in debt to the extent of twenty thousand pounds; I remain without means or patrimony—I am simply a second lieutenant, my eldest brother has only the same rank that I have, and my youngest brother is only a striped cadet: such the pre-

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(1) De Saint-Pierre was simply playing the hypocrite; for it would have then been easy for him to have repaired the wrongs done to the Chevalier de la Vérendrye.

(2) De la Jonquière, Bigot and de Saint-Pierre understood each other well in the case; they were the great *boodlers* of that day.

sent fruits of all that my father, my brothers and I have done.

"My brother who was assassinated, a few years ago by the Sioux, was not the most unfortunate one. His blood has no merit for us, that our father's and our own sweat has become useless. We must abandon that which has cost us so much, unless M. de Saint-Pierre changes his sentiments and communicates them to the Marquis de la Jonquière.

"Certainly, we would not have been useless for M. de Saint-Pierre. I never kept anything from him that I thought might serve him, but able as he may be, even supposing him to have the best intentions, I believe that he risks making many false moves and of losing himself more than once, by excluding us from his expedition. It is an advantage to have once gone astray, and it seems to us that we would now be sure of the proper route to reach the terminal object, be it what it may. Our greatest agony is to see ourselves snatched away from a sphere of action that we had intended to complete with all our endeavors.

"Deign, Monseigneur, decide the case of three orphans. Great as the wrong may be, can it be without a remedy? It is in Your Grace's hands. I fain would hope for compensation and consolation.

"To find ourselves thus excluded from the West, is to find ourselves, in a most cruel manner, deprived of a species of heritage — the entire burden of which would be ours, the entire benefits would be for others."

This noble letter of the Chevalier de la Vérendrye reveals a great deal of the bad treatment of himself and his brothers at the hands of M. de Saint-Pierre; it is the con-

firmation of an account of that period which says:—*"that the Intendant Bigot and M. de Saint-Pierre had arranged to work for their own benefit the fur trade of the West after the death of de la Vérendrye, and that at the end of three years they had realized immense fortunes at the expense of the State."*

The Marquis de la Jonquière had not the satisfaction of placing his hands on his own profits, for, in 1752, one year before de Saint-Pierre's return, he died.

There cannot be the least doubt that he favored the ambitious projects of those two men. The indifference, we might say the cruelty, with which he treated the discoverer's sons, is evidence enough. He knew well the intentions of the Court and the views of the two governors who had preceded him in the colony; he also knew the great worth of that family which had, for nearly twenty years, been devoted to the service of France; had he not been blinded by covetousness, he never would have allowed it to be so criminally despoiled of its patrimony. History can never too severely blast the reputations of those three men for such conduct. (1)

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(1) The translations of such parts of this work as the letters of the different Governors, of de la Vérendrye and others, may seem somewhat stiff. But the translater has deemed it better to preserve, as much as possible, the exact expressions of the writers than to substitute more rounded periods. The French of that day, and especially as written by diplomatists, on the one hand, and colonists, on the other, was not always classical nor even clear. We must take it, however, as we find it.

CHAPTER X.

SUMMARY.

Departure of de Saint-Pierre for the West. — Michillimacinac. — Fort Saint-Pierre. — Address to the Indians. — Fort Maurepas. — De Niverville sent to Paskoyac. — Arrival of de Saint-Pierre at Fort La Reine. — The Fort devoid of provisions. — Establishment of Fort La Jonquière. — Sickness of De Niverville. — De Saint-Pierre spends the winter quietly at Fort La Reine.

We will now see de Saint-Pierre at work in the trading-posts of the West. Henceforth the names of the de la Vérendrye will disappear from the annals of the Red River, and, strange irony of human affairs, the wealth that those vast regions contain, for the discovery of which they had sacrificed their lives and their fortunes, will serve to enrich obscure traders whose only merit was to have been daring travellers and vigorous walkers.

Despoiled most abominably of the fruits of their labors, the sons of the discoverer of the great prairies of the West were left without protection and without the slightest indemnification for all the losses to which they had been subjected by the Marquis de la Jonquière, Bigot and Legardeur de Saint-Pierre; for this was the trio that decided their fate.

On the 5th June, 1750, Legardeur de Saint-Pierre started for the trading-posts of the West, having with him, as lieutenant, M. de Niverville. On the 12th July, they reached Michillimacinac. He tarried there three

weeks, to give the men some rest as well as to get over his his own fatigue; for, he tells us, in his memoires, that he found that portion of the journey very hard — yet he was only at the commencement of his hardships.

"I started again," he says, "on the 6th August, from Michillimacinac, and on the 29th September I reached Rainy Lake. That is the first establishment in the West. I may remark that the route is most difficult, and that a thorough practice is needed to be able to find the roads; bad as I may have imagined them to be, I could not but be surprised at them. There are thirty-eight portages. The first of those portages is twelve miles (quatre lieues) in length, and the smallest of the others is a quarter of a league."

From the very first line, de Saint-Pierre's report indicates a man who is anxious to magnify beyond measure his services; it is a regular net-work of exaggerations and lies. The missionaries who to-day know the Red River can estimate at their proper value those reports of the *voyageurs* of former times in those wild countries.

De Saint-Pierre's recital will deceive no man who has the least knowledge of his fellow-men.

We know that from Lake Superior to Rainy Lake there are ten portages and not thirty-eight; that the longest of them is only nine miles, and that several of them are less than an acre. I touch upon these exaggerations in order to recall what I said in a previous chapter, namely, that Legardeur de Saint-Pierre knew nothing about the Red River country and that he was not, what de la Jonquières styled him in his letter to the Colonial minister, "the man best acquainted with the Indian countries."

The rest of the report is all like the beginning. De Saint-Pierre's language, all through, denotes a vain

character, devoid of loyalty and seeking to make capital at the expense of his predecessor.

Before his departure from Montreal, de Saint-Pierre ignored a lot of information that the Chevalier de la Vérendrye had been good enough to give him. He had not, as he admits, formed any idea of the difficulties to be met with by the traveller in those distant countries. Hence it is that he made blunder after blunder, and ended by ruining entirely the trading-posts that had cost de la Vérendrye eighteen years of labor, all his possessions and those of his family.

At Rainy Lake, de Saint-Pierre met the Indians. "I made them feel greatly the goodness of the King, my master, in having them visited and all their wants supplied. I confined myself in this regard to what was prescribed for me in my instructions. I was very well received, and to judge from external appearances, these Indians were well disposed towards the French. I was not long, however, in perceiving that all these nations (tribes) were very much disordered and impertinent, which may be attributed to the too great indulgence shown them." (1)

The greatest impertinence, according to our view, is that of de Saint-Pierre in attempting to criticise the conduct of de la Vérendrye, whom he would represent as having brought *disorder* amongst the Indians, by giving them too many presents and not treating them severely enough. We have already said that de Saint-Pierre knew nothing about the country, nor the Indian habits, and that he was the man least qualified to continue de la Vérend-

(1) Whatever other qualities de Saint-Pierre has, he was not an adept in the use of the French language.—*Translater.*

drye's work. Nor did he do aught else than destroy it.

When passing by Fort Saint-Charles, de Saint-Pierre promised the Indians that he would have a fort built at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. "I promised," he says, "to all the tribes that M. de Niverville would go and create an establishment nine hundred miles farther up than that on the Paskoyac. I agreed with all the tribes that they should unite with me at that new trading post."

This project, which he proposed to the Indians, in view of which they would be dragged twelve hundred miles to sell their furs, while they were within four hundred miles of the James Bay, must not have charmed them over much. But de Saint-Pierre's memoire was only for the form, assured as he was that the Government would never inquire as to the truth of it.

On reaching Fort Maurepas, de Niverville took the road to Fort Paskoyac. The season was too far advanced to travel in a canoe; from the mouth of the Red River he went through the woods to Fort Bourbon. It was a journey full of hardships for him. Obliged to carry the baggage and provisions on his back, or to drag them on small sleds, he was forced, through fatigue and exhaustion, to leave a portion of them on the way.

Finding nothing in the Forts he and his men were exposed to starvation. When he reached Paskoyac, de Niverville had nothing to eat, except some boiled fish, which he caught from day to day; this state of famine lasted until the spring.

De Saint-Pierre had no better luck; but we can say that he deserved it. The autumn season was drawing to a close when he reached Fort La Reine. That Fort, being abandoned since the departure of de la Vérendrye, was devoid of provisions. At that season, the Indians

had gone into their winter encampment in the woods and along the rivers. De Saint-Pierre sent his men at once in search of some camp; but the small amount of food that they brought back did not check the rigid fast that was undermining de Saint-Pierre's health.

In the spring, de Niverville, who had received orders to go up the Saskatchewan and to construct an establishment at the foot of the Mountains, was so ill that he could not undertake the long journey.

However, on the 29th May (1751), he started ten men ahead, giving them to understand that a month later he would join them. He had not forgotten the hardships that he endured the previous autumn in going to Fort Paskoyac; with his health shattered by the fast and sickness of the winter he did not dare start out again.

Happily the ten *voyageurs* reached the foot of the Mountains and built a Fort to which they gave the name of de la Jonquière, in honor of the Governor of the colony. As there was a large amount of game in that section, they had abundance of provisions.

Some historians say that the Fort in question was built about the place where Calgary now stands: but the older *voyageurs,* who knew the country and the Indian traditions, state that it was much nearer the Mountains, in a place where it is believed traces of that establishment have been found. It is said that when an Indian passes that spot he casts a stone on it (1).

Persons who have visited the place say that it was much better situated than Calgary for a trading-post.

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(1) In truth there is a large heap of stones there. This was an ancient Irish custom also; each one in passing the burial place of a murderer or of one who was murdered, placed a stone there, and the heap was called the *Cairn*, scores of which are to be found in Ireland.—*Translater.*

When the news of de Niverville's illness reached Fort La Reine, where de Saint-Pierre was, the latter prepared to go down to the Grand Portage of Lake Superior to receive provisions and merchandise. For the time being de Niverville was left to himself in his fort at Paskoyac, where he spent the summer — being prevented by his sickness from going to join his ten men at Fort de la Jonquière.

De Saint-Pierre was not back at Fort La Reine until the 7th October (1751). All that time the discoveries did not make much progress.

On the 14th November, he undertook to go to de Niverville, at Fort Paskoyac.

"I started," he says, "to go to Fort La Jonquière on the ice and to follow up the discovery. (1)

"I was getting along with the best grace in the world and everything seemed to combine to favor my wishes, when I met two Frenchmen and four Indians who informed me of the continuation of M. de Niverville's sickness and, in addition, of the treason of the Assiniboines towards the Jhateolinis who were to be my guides to the country of the Kinon-geolinis."

After this, de Saint-Pierre entered into long and insignificant details concerning this treason, which was of no consequence to him, especially at that moment, since the event took place at nine hundred miles from Fort La Reine, and the ten men at Fort La Jonquière suffered nothing thereby. Moreover, there was no danger in going to Fort Paskoyac, where de Niverville lay seriously ill. De Saint-Pierre found it easier to turn back to Fort La

(1) You will soon see that he did not go far, and that he soon had good reason to retrace his steps to Fort La Reine.

Reine where he could quietly exchange his goods for furs without running any risk of going astray.

"In the impossibility," (1) he says, "of continuing my discovery, I sought to secure all the information possible from the Indians to learn if there were not some river that led elsewhere than to the Hudson Bay.

"An old Indian assured me that, recently, the tribe of Snake Indians had reached an establishment very far distant from their country, and that the route that they had followed to reach it went straight towards the setting sun.

"I used every means to have that Indian go to that establishment. I promised him a rich reward if he would bring me an answer to a letter that I would give him.

"Those I sent off with that letter did not return, I did not even heard from them."

This is the way that de Saint-Pierre labored to discover the Western Sea. We know how de la Vérendrye's sons adopted a very different method.

(1) The word "impossibility" comes in well in this case.

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CHAPTER XI.

SUMMARY.

De Saint-Pierre in the trading posts of the West (continued).— An adventure at Fort La Reine. — De Saint-Pierre returns with Indian chiefs to Fort La Reine. — His recall to Montreal by Governor Duquesne. — The Chevalier de la Corne. Trading-posts of the West are abandoned. —End of the French denomnation in the West.

During the winter of 1752, de Saint-Pierre had an adventure at Fort La Reine that is worth relating. Here is how he tells it, himself:—

"I had had the pleasure of repairing Fort La Reine without ever expecting to have the adventure that I am going to relate.

"On the 22nd February, about nine in the afternoon, I was in the Fort with five Frenchmen. (1) I had sent the rest of my men to get provisions, as I had been without any for some days. I was quiet in my room, when two hundred armed Assiniboines came into my Fort. These Indians were, in a moment, scattered through all the houses; several, without arms, came into my place, the others remained in the Fort. My men came to notify me of the appearance of the Indians. I hastened to them. I told them plainly that they were very daring to come in a crowd, thus armed, into my Fort. One of them made

(1) The number of men then at the Fort was nineteen. Fourteen were absent at this particular time.

answer, in the Cree language, that they had come to smoke. I told them that such was not the manner to do things and that they would have to retire at once. I thought that the firmness with which I had spoken to them had intimidated them, especially as I had put four of the most insolent Indians out, without they saying a word. I felt at once at home; but, in a moment, a soldier came to inform me that the guard-room was full of Indians, and that they had taken possession of the arms. I hastened to the guard-room. I asked those Indians, through my Cree interpreter, what were their intentions, and, at the same time, I prepared with my little troop, for battle. My interpreter, who deceived me, said that the Indians had no bad intentions, and, at the same instant, an Assiniboine orator, who had unceasingly delivered beautiful harangues, told my interpreter that, in spite of him, the tribe wanted to pillage and to kill me. No sooner had I learned their determination than I forgot about the necessity of taking up arms. I seized hold of a burning brand. I burst in the door of the powder magazine; I smashed two barrels of powder over which I waved my burning torch, making it be told in a positive tone to the Indians, that I would not perish by their hands and that in dying I would have the glory of making them suffer the same fate. The Indians saw more of my torch than they heard of my words. They all flew to the gate of the Fort, which they fairly shook in their hurry. I soon dropped my torch and was not slow in closing the gate of my Fort.

"The peril which I had happily escaped, by thus placing myself in danger of destruction, caused me a great anxiety concerning the fourteen men whom I had sent after food. I kept a good watch on my bastions; I saw no more of the enemy, and, in the evening, my fourteen men arrived without having met with any misadventure."

De Saint-Pierre spent the rest of the winter quietly in his Fort. In the spring the Assiniboines came to Fort La Reine to explain their miserable attempt at pillage, the previous February. De Saint-Pierre neither repelled, nor entirely pardoned them; he made answer that he would lay the case before his master, the Governor, and would intercede for them. We all know the value of that kind of soft-sawder and, barbarians and all as they were, the Indians were not taken in by it. No more did de Saint-Pierre place any faith in their expressions of regret. Being about to go down to the Grand Portage to secure some merchandise, he dare not leave any person to guard Fort La Reine. The adventure of the month of February had frightened all his men. He asked the Indians to take care of the Fort, which they gladly agreed to do. We will see, after a while, how they kept their promise.

On the 24th July, 1752, de Saint-Pierre arrived safely at the Grand Portage. It is probable that he had left a part of his men at the different Forts along the way.

He started back to the West with provisions, munitions and goods for trading purposes. Despite the war going on amongst hte Indians, de Saint-Pierre did not neglect the trading. Each year he brought up quantities of provisions, and never did he complain that any were stolen from him. He seemed to only find danger in his path when there was question of prosecuting the discovery.

On the 29th September, down the Winnipeg river, he learned that, four days after his departure for the Grand Portage, the Assiniboine Indians had burned Fort La Reine. It was the simplest way for them to get rid of the trouble of taking care of it.

"Reaching the mouth of the Nipik (1) river," says de Saint-Pierre, "I was grieved to learn from the Crees that, four days after my departure from Fort La Reine, the Indians had burned it down. This, combined with the lack of provisions I found, obliged me to go spend the winter at the Red River, where game is abundant."

We have seen that de la Vérendrye's son had built a small fort at the mouth of the Assiniboine at a place that is still called Fort-Rouge. It was probably in that Fort that de Saint-Pierre wintered in 1753.

During the winter he received a letter from officer Marin, who had been sent by de la Jonquière among the Sioux. Marin, like de Saint-Pierre, did his utmost to pacify the Indians, but without much success. He was likewise one of Bigot's creatures sent to trade in the West. According to a document of that period, "*he had been charged, in conjunction with de Saint-Pierre,* to go and trade in the West, while exploring the countries as far as the sea, if *that were possible.*"

Marin, in his letter, said that the Sioux chiefs desired to have an interview with the Cree chiefs, and invited them to come and meet them in council at Michillimacinac. De Saint-Pierre communicated that letter to the Crees, who consented to send three of their number with him.

On the 18th June, he started from the Winnipeg river, with the three Cree chiefs, for the Grand Portage and thence to Michillimacinac.

On the 10th July he passed Fort Saint-Charles, on the Lake of the Woods. There he had the pleasure of find-

(1) The name used by de Saint-Pierre, for the Winnipeg river.

ing two Frenchmen who had been a long time prisoners with the Sioux. These latter had sent them to meet de Saint-Pierre to show their willingness to conclude a treaty of peace at the Grand Portage — supposing that the delegates of the different tribes could not go as far as Michillimacinac.

The Chevalier de Niverville met de Saint-Pierre, at Lake Superior, on the 28th July. He, too, had abandoned his Fort Paskoyac, from which he had not moved in three years. The two continued on the route with the Cree chiefs. A few days before they reached Michillimacinac, they met the Chevalier de la Corne, who was going to the West to take charge of the trading posts. De Saint-Pierre was recalled to Montreal by Governor Duquesne. The Sioux chiefs, who had gone as far as Michillimacinac, had already gone back, with officer Marin, in the direction of their own tribes; they had not awaited de Saint-Pierre's arrival to assert their good dispositions and to promise to keep the peace. The Cree chiefs turned back with and under the command of the Chevalier de la Corne, while Saint-Pierre and the Chevalier de Niverville went on to Montreal — where they arrived on the 20th September.

Thus ended de Saint-Pierre's expedition. De la Vérendrye's work was falling all to pieces.

The Chevalier de Niverville had not gone any farther than Fort Paskoyac. The men he had sent to the foot of the Rocky Mountains had there built Fort La Jonquière, but he had never gone that far in person. De Saint-Pierre had barely gone to Fort La Reine. Thus, under his command, the work of discovery had not progressed one step. On the other hand, he got a splendid harvest of furs, and he and Bigot realized immense fortunes, at

the expense of the State, which derived no benefit from the expedition.

On the 2nd November, de Saint-Pierre was given by the Governor, the Marquis Duquesne, command of the Belle-Rivière, in place of Marin, who was dying. In 1755, he commanded a band of six hundred Indians at Lake Saint-Sacrament; he was killed by an Englishman. Bigot was recalled to France and cast into the Bastille. The Marquis de la Jonquière died in 1752. Thus the three conspirators, who had combined to do de la Vérendrye's sons out of their rights, did not have the pleasure of enjoying the fruits of their rapacity.

After de Saint-Pierre's expedition, the Chevalier de la Corne was the last French officer to have charge of the Forts in the West. He had a Fort built a little way below the confluence of the two branches of the Saskatchewan. He called it Fort La Corne — a name it still retains. It is the only one, of all the Forts built by the French, that exists to-day. Of Forts La Reine, Maurepas, St. Charles, Bourbon, Dauphin and La Jonquière, not a single trace is left, and the merchant trading companies, that came into the country later on, did not try to rebuild them.

After 1756, the Forts were abandoned, and to the great delight of the English, the Indians again took the trail to the Hudson Bay. It is quite probable, however, that several of the Frenchmen and Canadians, who had followed the discoverers and the traders into the West, had become enamored of that life of adventure, and continued to live with the Indian tribes.

The Indians long remembered the Frenchmen who had lived amongst them and who had brought the light of civilization to their tribes. And, even for long years did they retain the vestiges of that civilization.

In 1811, an English traveller, named Cox, in his work, "Adventures on the Columbia River," says that during his journey, he was very often shown, in those wild deserts, little wooden huts still ornamented with crucifixes and other emblems of Christianity. "These homes are now deserted," he adds, "but they are still looked upon with pious respect by the traveller. The poor Indians, themselves, who, since the departure of the Jesuits, have fallen back into their old habits, have the greatest respect for those houses that were inhabited, they say, *by the good white fathers who never robbed them, nor ever cheated them like other whitemen.*"

Here ends the reign of the French in the West.

THE SECOND PERIOD

1760 to 1822

THE TRADING COMPANIES

CHAPTER I.

SUMMARY.

The "Coureurs des bois" (1) (trappers), and the scattered traders.

The second period of the history of the Canadian West commences with the year 1760, that is to say, with the conquest of Canada by England, and closes with the year 1822, when the Catholic hierarchy was established in the North-West. To understand the history of those sixty-two years, the designs of Divine Providence must be taken into account and studied by the light of Faith, otherwise the reader will find but chaotic confusion through which, at very rare intervals, darts a ray of civilization.

The wonderful adventures of a few trappers —*coureurs des bois* — who sought their fortunes amongst the In-

(1) Although the term "Coureur des bois," is used in English, the translater prefers to use the single word "trapper."

dian tribes, and who returned home to close their days, belong more to the realm of romance than to the domain of history. Interest is soon lost in these marvellous events when they can no longer be made to serve a general plan. Such legends suit well to amuse the household gathered around the domestic hearth. The historian's field is more expansive than the limits of the fireside; this we shall recognize while speaking of the various personages who passed over the stage of the North-West during the sixty-two years that we have styled the second period in the history of the Canadian West.

In the eye of God, the paramount plan is the establishment of Holy Church for the salvation of souls and the greater glory of His Divine Son. Such appears to be the sole end of all the events that history unfolds before our eyes. Whether the facts are accomplished on a large or a small stage; whether they are accompanied by greater or less noise; whether they attract the attention of the world for a longer or a shorter time, in the end they are all of equal importance to God, since He makes use of the all for the one grand purpose of bringing saints to heaven. It is from this lofty standpoint that we should study history, and above all that it should be written; otherwise we risk finding a series of purposeless events and a mere upheaval of hap-hazard causes. Everything that takes place here below can only be of real interest when seen from this supreme view-point. Thus do we perceive in the successes accorded by the Almighty to men the scaffolding of the edifice He wishes to construct, and we are not surprised to find the same men cast down once the building has been completed.

* * *

The Sieur de la Vérendrye had discovered the Western country as far as the foot of the Rocky Mountains; but that was the limit of his mission. Yet, with the aid of the missionaries whom he had taken with him in his long voyages, he had afforded the infidel tribes, that inhabited those regions, glimpses of true civilization. They began to wish for a knowledge of the truth, and the time was at hand when apostles of Christianity would come amongst them and instruct them.

But, before all this could take place, safe routes had to be found and highways of communication had to be created in those desert wilds.

The early discoverers, occupied as they were with the urgent work of exploration, had no time to mark out roads, nor to augment the number of depots where reserves of provisions might be established. Moreover, the expenses required for the execution of such works were beyond the means of individuals; the large and perfectly organized associations alone could meet them.

To make the North-West accessible to the missionaries and to afford them a way of carrying the boon of Faith to the Indian tribes that inhabit that country, for some years, God will leave it in the hands of a great Company, which, for the purpose of obtaining the wealth therein contained, will open up roads and create safe avenues of communication. Still more: to stimulate the zeal of that Company, and to hasten the works in operation, He will summon the missionaries to that field and the Company will disappear. It is evident that the colossal fortunes built up by the masters of the North-West were not the terminal design of Divine Providence on that country during the second period of its history.

* * *

During the French domination in Canada, the business of fur trading was carried on under a system of exclusive privileges. The Governor of the colony granted certain officers a license to go and trade within the limits of a defined territory. The Indians amongst whom they went had no permission to apply to others, than these licensed traders, for the goods that they required.

By means of that system the Government more easily attained its object, which was the civilizing of the Indians by grouping them in families and in villages. It could thus accustom them to the habit of work and have them instructed by the missionaries. The favored traders were generally persons of good education, who sought to correspond with the intentions of those who sent them. Besides, their conduct was closely watched by the missionaries who spared no pains to prevent the sale of intoxicating liquors to the Indians. At the time of the conquest, there were still to be found a few villages that were formed by Indian families under the French regime.

After the ceding of Canada to England, the system of trading privileges was abandoned, and each one was free to do business with the Indians on his own account. The rivalry that resulted from that unbriddled liberty opened the door to all sorts of disorders and crimes, and, in less than twenty years, all traces of civilization has disappeared. This was a great misfortune for the colony, for trade, and for the Indians. Therein the merchants found the ruin of their fur business and the Indians found the ruin of their morals — and, consequently, they found misery.

Every one knows the unconquerable passion that pos-

sesses the Indian for intoxicating liquor. In order to get it, he will gladly abandon all he has; he would sell himself to procure drink. The traders did not fail to play upon that weakness for their own benefit. It was the great means used by them to defeat competition. All those rival traders, scattered over an immense territory, and at long distances from civilization, knew that the law could not reach them, and they could count on impunity in the perpetration of every crime.

A Mr. Henry, who carried on fur trading, says in his diary, that when, in 1775, he reached the Grand Portage of Lake Superior (1), "he found the traders in a state of mutual enmity; each one carried on his affairs in the manner that he believed to be the most likely to injure his neighbor's." "Conduct," he adds, "which had a dangerous effect with the Indians."

Like facts are reported by Sir Alex. MacKenzie, in his "Observations on the Fur Trade." "This trading was carried on," he says, "in a country very remote from all legal restraint; where there was nothing to prevent the employment of all manner of means that might lead to success. The bad conduct of the traders not only caused them to lose opportunities of making profits, but also the esteem of the Indians and the respect of their employees, who were only too ready to follow their example. For them the winter was nothing but an uninterrupted scene of quarrels and battles. The Indians had only contempt for people who acted with such disorder and bad faith."

If four or five of these traders had not distinguished themselves, amongst others, if not by more disgraceful

(1) The Grand Portage is on the north side of Lake Superior, at the point where the traders started inland to reach the Red River. For a long time it was an important trading post.

conduct, at least by the success they obtained and the fortunes they accumulated, the first twenty years of the history of the North-West might be given in a few pages.

Alexander Henry was one of the first Englishmen who ventured into the Upper Country, after the abandonment of the Forts by the French. He associated with himself, or rather he took for guide, an old French trader named Etienne Campion — an able hunter, and especially a man of remarkable fidelity. They both set out from Lachine in August, 1760. Alexander Henry was only twenty-three years of age. He had never done any trading, and he knew nothing of the country into which he and his guide were about to venture. He was one of the first who, for the sake of the trading business, thought of taking advantage of the Indians' unfortunate passion for rum. He had secure a good supply for exchange purposes, but his first attempt was not successful.

The first Indians that Henry met stole a part of his rum and told him, by way of consolation, that the same thing would happen to him further on.

In fact, at Michillimacinac, he lost all the merchandise that he had brought with him for trading, had to hide for a long time to avoid being killed, and succeeded, after untold hardships, in reaching Niagara. After such a beginning any other man would have been discouraged and would never again have dreamed of returning to the North-West. Henry wanted to tempt fortune for a second time. He started in 1765, with another companion, named J. Bte. Cadotte, a man well known in the Upper Country. (1) He was bound not to come back to Can-

(1) In Manitoba there are still several Cadotte families, descendants of this trader, who had married a squaw. One of these families reside at St. Norbert, near Winnipeg.

ada till he had made his fortune. In fact he did not return to Montreal until 1776, after an absence of sixteen years. His success in the fur trade became the subject of general conversation. At that period, the accounts given by travellers who had lived long among the Indians were more interesting than are those of to-day.

After taking a trip to Europe, Henry established himself in Montreal, and in 1784, took part in the organization of the North-West Company.

Whilst Alex. Henry had made wealth in the North-West, the other traders, until 1770, had scarcely gone beyond the Grand Portage and Lake Nepigon. In that year, one Curry, went as far as Lake Bourbon, and spent the winter near the Fort Bourbon, which a son of de la Vérendrye had built in 1741. His success surpassed all his expectations; he returned the following year with a sufficiently rich cargo of furs to save him the necessity of ever again bothering himself with the fur trade.

Others wished to follow his example and to go the farthest Forts that the French had built. In 1771, a Mr. Finlay went as far as Fort La Corne. That was certainly the last Fort built by the French; but it was not the most remote one, for, in 1751, de Niverville had constructed Fort La Jonquière, at the headwaters of the Saskatchewan, six hundred miles farther away. Fort La Corne was not built until five years later.

As all the Northern Indians, since the conquest, had ceased to frequent the French Forts and had again taken the trail to the Hudson Bay, it is quite probable that trading on the Saskatchewan was not very brisk. In 1772, Joseph Frobisher, of Montreal, thought that it would be more profitable to go straight north to meet the Indians

on the Hudson Bay route. He went firstly to Fort Paskoyac, not far from the mouth of the Saskatchewan, and thence he went in the direction of Churchill river, where no person had as yet ever gone to trade. Indians in great numbers arrived there with heavy loads of rich furs. These furs were intended to be used to pay off debts that the Indians had contracted the previous year with the English at the Hudson Bay.

When Frobisher offered to purchase their entire stock they refused to sell, as they were scrupulous about breaking their word and doing an injustice to the merchants who had advanced them provisions and merchandise. But Frobisher insisted so strongly, and especially in consideration of the high prices that he offered, they at last gave in. The quantity of furs that they sold him was so great that he was obliged to leave a portion behind, and to build a fort — ever since called Trade Fort — to shelter the same. When he returned, the following year, to get his furs, he found them untouched. The poor Indians had shown themselves to be more honest than the white men, who came to teach them how to deceive and to be unfair in their bargains.

On his return to Montreal, Frobisher sold his cargo and realized $50,000 clear profit. Such a fortune, made in such a brief space of time, created a regular fever amongst the fur merchants; all of them wanted to set out for the Upper Country. During several years a crowd of other individual travellers ventured into the West with their merchandise, and especially with liquor, which they distributed amongst the Indians. These traders, scattered in all directions amongst the different tribes, set them the example in every kind of vice and fairly robbed the poor Indians. All means were good in their eyes. Their

unique object was to make fortunes as quickly as possible, without any regard for the consequences of their conduct.

By dint of witnessing their avarice and covetousness, the Indians began to detest the traders who were clearly robbing them, and they secretly conspired to put them all to death at a given time. In the autumn of 1780, the Assiniboine Indians, to avenge the death of one of their number who had been killed by an over-dose of liquor, which a clerk had given him, attacked two Forts and killed three Canadians. Several trading posts were attacked at the same time, and the plot to exterminate all the whites was about to be put in execution, when an event took place which threw the entire country into a state of consternation and, at the same time, saved the traders from certain death.

A band of Assiniboines, that had started on the war-path in search of scalps in the land of the Mandans, returned bringing with them a sickness never before known in the North: it was the small-pox. That terrible scourge, which carries fear and horror with it, created indiscribable scenes amongst the Indians. Only an eye-witness could ever form any conception of them.

The hygienic means used by civilized peoples to counteract that awful epidemic were totally undreamed of amongst the Indians. Huddled together under miserable tents where the temperature is as varied as without, exposed day and night to the cold drafts of wind that constantly whistle over the immense prairies, it is easy to understand how they fall victims to the scourge once it makes its appearance in a tribe. Scarcely one of those attacked with it ever escapes.

In 1780 the traders reported that the three-fourths of the Assiniboine nation were carried off. Thus did the

white men escaped the massacre prepared for them; but, the other hand, the trading business was ruined on account of the deaths of the hunters. For two years the Montreal merchants received no furs from the North-West. Foreseeing the losses that would result, and being desirous of establishing a trading system on a better basis, they met during the winter of 1783 and 1784, and laid the foundations of the North-West Company.

CHAPTER II.

The formation of the North-West Company

SUMMARY.

Why the Company took the name of French Company. — Its first organization; names of its first members (Bourgeois). — First secession. — Struggle with certain discontented traders. — Establishment of Forts on the northern extremity of La Crosse island and at Lake Athabaska. — Meeting of the traders in 1787.

In beginning this chapter we may as well at once state that the name French Company adopted by the North-West Company belonged no more to it than it did to its rival, the Hudson Bay Company, since all its partners and the three-fourths of its clerks were English or Scotch. From the very commencement it was composed of Englishmen and, in 1804, out of forty partners, thirty-eight were English, and only two were French — Messrs. Chaboillez and Rocheblave. It was about the same with the clerks. It is true that all the servants were Canadians, but those porters and manual laborers, who worked like slaves, under the orders of English masters, were no more members of the Company than were the Indian hunters who came to trade at the forts.

The Indians had long remembered the French who had gone into the West; they recalled their fair dealings with them, and also the spirit of peace which their missionaries had brought with them. The word Frenchman was pleasant to their ears, and awakened the sentiments that

they had entertained for de la Vérendrye and his sons The North-West Company wished to benefit by the prestige attached to the French name, in order to capture the confidence, not only of the aborigines but of all the Canadians in its service ,and at the same time to render their great rival odious by calling it the English Company. This title was abused of for the purpose of having the faults of its partners, which history will adjudge, excused.

Although, during several years, this Company played a very important part in Canada, still its history is scarcely known outside the mercantile domain. It was known to be doing an immense business in furs with the Indians of the West; that the greater number of its partners realized large fortunes, and that it kept in its service a whole army of Canadian employees, known as the "voyageurs of the Upper Country" (*les voyageurs des pays d'En-Haut.*)

But how matters were going on amongst the Indians out there; what kind of life did those partners, all those clerks and all those trappers lead; what morals prevailed, what justice was obtainable,— all so many things that were unknown, if not wholly, at least in part.

Like all large organizations, the North-West Company had influence in high places, and by means of its gold it had created favorable opinions in the highest strata of society.

Certainly it is not desirable that all the mysteries of the North-West should be revealed in the light of day; a detailed history of all the acts and doings of those traders would be far from edifying. But it is the historian's duty to reveal all that may have done so in decency

The shareholders of the Company were generally men who had received a high education; they were, in the

worldly sense, *gentlemen.* At Montreal and Quebec they were admitted to and courted in high society on account of the rank they held and the agreeable manners they displayed on returning from the Upper Country. They were called the *North-Westers* (les *Nord-Ouest*). They lived the princely lives of millionaires. Their conversation was interesting and everyone liked to hear tell of their distant travels. They clung to external forms and formalities, and to everything calculated to increase their prestige. But in their own sphere each was a double man; a civilized person and a trader. If, in Canada, they showed amiable and delightful qualities, amongst the Indians, as traders, they were without heart or sympathy, and for the preservation of what they called *their trading rights,* they would stop at nothing. From top to bottom, from the leading partner down to the last employee, they all were filled with the same spirit

In taking the places of the individual, or isolated, traders, the partners of this Company placed themselves in the way of more surely realizing immense fortune, but the North-West did not gain anything thereby, either from the standpoint of morality or that of civilization. The Indians were more systematically taken advantage of and demoralized, and the trappers, as in the past, continued to beset themselves with all manner of vices. These things the continuation of this history will fully establish.

The great disadvantages resulting from a competition carried too far gave rise to the formation of the North-West Company. This organization, from its very inception, was careful to close the North-West to all individual traders who sought to trade in furs on the same territory. These merchants, who thus constituted themselves into a company, had no special rights. Any British subject

could claim the same. They did not ignore the fact that any steps taken by them to ask Parliament to accord them exclusive trading privileges, would be absolutely useless. In the absence of a legal title they had hoped to preserve this monopoly by force and audacity

The trading business, which had been completely ruined by the disgraceful conduct of the whitemen among the Indians, and by the death of the greater number of the hunters, through the small-pox of 1780, began, in 1784, to revive. The fur-bearing animals, that had been left in peace for three years, had multiplied to a large degree, and the hunters, who had become careless after the epidemic that carried off so many of their number, commenced afresh to follow their old-time mode of living.

The English traders, however, did not desire to follow the former system. The losses they had sustained during latter years convinced them that another method of trading would have to be adopted. During the winter of 1783 and 1784, the most important of their number met to do business in the form of a society. The leaders of that association were Messrs. Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher, the oldest North-West traders, and Mr. Simon McTavish who received the commission of agent. A number of those who were to be associated with them were then in the North-West and could not come down to Montreal to consult with the heads of the organization, but the latter had promised the new partners to give entire satisfaction to the absent shareholders.

The fundamental principle of the arrangement was that the separate capital of each merchant should go into the common fund, and that each individual shareholder would receive profits in proportion to the capital he had invested.

In the early spring the associates, or members of the Company, went with their letters of credit, to the Grand Portage, and there met those who had not been able to reach Montreal in time to assist at the convention.

Messrs. Peter Pond and Peter Pangman, with a few others, were very dissatisfied with the shares allotted to them and refused to unite with the others. This unexpected difficulty disturbed the calculations of the budding Company that had such need of all its force and all its men to take immediate possession of the trading posts in the North and in the West. Pangman and Pond were able and energetic men and accustomed to the Indians: they could have done considerable injury to the Company by drawing away its employees and by turning the fur-sellers against it. But, on the other hand, to at once give in to the demands of a few discontented individuals would be, in the eyes of the leaders, to pave the way to a host of other annoyances in the future; they preferred to accept the challenge in the hope that the opposition would not last long. It required no ordinary audacity in the separatists to face a Company as powerfully organized as that of the North-West, with its army of employees.

Pangman and Pond went down to Montreal to make arrangements with a commercial house for supplies to carry on fur trading. The firm of Gregory and McLeod accepted their proposals and even took shares in the new Company.

In the spring of 1785, Pangman and Ross were early at the Grand Portage to select a convenient site and to build a store and store-houses. Their associates went to them in the month of June. The plan of the North-West Company was to immediately proceed to the extreme north, to there erect forts and to cut off the route from

the Hudson Bay Company. For over a century, all the Indians of Athabaska and La Crosse Island had taken their furs to the Company at the seashore. We have seen how, in 1775, Frobisher met them carrying their furs at Churchill river and had succeeded in having them sell him the products of their hunt; but, ever since then they had kept on going to the Hudson Bay. The finest and the most beautiful fur came from that region, which was the land of the otter and the beaver.

The North-West Company had at its disposal sufficient employees to man trading posts all the way from Lake Superior to Lake Athabaska, and to have a foothold wherever their antagonists might chance to settle. It may be said that from the very first year the Company was master of the territory. However, the Company of the separatists was so energetic in its attitude towards its rival that the latter dare not at first use any violence, But that truce was only an apparent one; ambition soon put an end to it. During the winter of 1787, serious engagements took place between the employees of the two companies in the northern Forts; both dead and wounded were to be found there.

The scenes of disorder that the North-West had witnessed during the twenty years prior to the formation of the companies were repeated and even outdone. They had once destroyed the trading business; they now threatened to destroy it again. The partners of the Companies were frightened by this condition of affairs, and thought even of combining the two organizations. You should hear Sir Alexander MacKenzie tell of those days of rampant crime. "After the strongest opposition ever seen in that part of the world," he says, "after having suffered all the opposition that jealousy and rivalry could cre—

ate; after one of our associates had been killed, another maimed, and that one of our clerks had with difficulty escaped death, having received a ball through his powder-horn, while on duty, our adversaries were at last obliged to accord us a share in the business. As we had had enormous losses, the joining of the Companies was in every respect much to be desired by us; it took place in the month of July, 1787."

The struggle had lasted scarcely two years, but it was severe, and the same Sir Alexander MacKenzie admitted some years later that it took him four years to repair the losses that he had sustained. (1)

(1) The word "Bourgeois," is represented in English by "Gentlemen-Partners"; from an obvious reason the translater omits the word "Gentlemen," and simply uses "Partners."

CHAPTER III.

SUMMARY.

The North-West Company after 1787. — Their plans to remain sole mistress of the fur-trading business. — They build forts in the extreme north to prevent the Indians from going to the Hudson Bay. — Works of the discoverers Alex. Mackenzie, Fraser and Quesnel. — Journey to the country of the Mandans. — Reflections of an Indian chief.

Freed, after 1787, from all serious competition, the Company no longer thought of anything other than the extension of the field of its commercial operations and the securing of the exclusive monopoly of the fur trade in all the North-West. Whilst, to the south of the Saskatchewan, the tribes, since the discovery, sought to have relations with the French traders, those on the north side always kept on, for over a century, to take their furs to the English at the Hudson Bay. To turn these latter Indians southward, and to draw them away from the Hudson Bay, the only way was to get in their path and to form an alliance with them.

The members of the Company were able men who were impregnated with the genius of commerce. They were aware that, to become masters of that immense region, they should not stop at any expenditure, for the mine to be worked would infallibly return manifold whatever might be sent in the operations.

They consequently erected their forts at regular distances along the route from Lake Superior to the Great Slave Lake, and supplied all their trading posts with a

sufficient number of men to prevent any Indian camp from escaping their watchfulness. Thus the Hudson Bay Company, confined to the seashore, would have to face the ordeal of famine or else come out and enter the competition; in the latter alternative the members of the North-West Company would, in a short space, ruin their great rival and be forever more rid of it. Such was the calculation. Later on we will see that they miscalculated, and that after a determined struggle, with alternating successes and reverses, the Hudson Bay Company would finally absorb its great antagonist when the latter's mission would be accomplished.

With associations of men, as with individuals, bad as they may be, they do not fail, from time to time, to perform praiseworthy acts that are remarkable in their series of crimes. The North-West Company, which history will judge with impartiality, had done many a wrong in the course of its brief career; what we shall relate regarding it will be the whole truth. Its great success and the brilliant part it played in those days did not give it any claim to impunity. It was guilty of great crimes, and it is well that posterity should know this; history is intended to serve as a lesson. But, as several members of that Company, despite the numerous faults of others among them, had performed works deserving of high praise, we will hasten to give them due credit for the same before entering upon the story of the wrongs committed.

Unlike other incorporated mercantile companies, whose privileges are subject to conditions, such as the obligation of helping colonization or some work of public utility, and which privileges come from the government; the North-West Company, which formed itself, depended upon itself alone and was free from all restrictions in regard to *whomsoever* it might be.

The sole object of its existence was the building up of fortunes for a few individuals. No thought of civilizing influences entered into the calculations of its organizers. The main and the unique ambition of its promoters was to turn to their own benefit, by all and any means imaginable, the wealth of the vast North-Western country and, if it were necessary in order to attain that end, to strew their pathway with moral and material ruins. With such principles as a basis we can readily imagine all that might take place in those distant regions.

Among the members of that remarkable organization there were men noted for their striking intelligence, and who sought larger horizons than those that merely framed in the profitable trading business.

The works accomplished by these men alone shed a lustre upon the Company. Whilst to-day the names of the great lords of the Northland, who once reigned supreme over lake and prairie, have fallen into oblivion, those of Mackenzie, Fraser and Quesnel still live in the memories of men and will so live as long as the results of their discoveries survive.

In this instance, have we the evidence that, in order to leave a name in the world, it does not suffice to have been wealthy and to have managed great business enterprises, but that it is necessary to have that name connected with some lasting achievement, associated with some work of general benefit to society.

The notoriety of the egotist dies with himself. This is easily understood; for, having labored for himself alone his memory must pass with his person: *Memoria eorum periit cum sonitu.*

On account of his discoveries, which were undertaken in the interests of science, the name of Sir Alexander

MacKenzie will remain a most conspicuouus mark in the history of the North-West.

Born in Scotland, he came to Canada when quite young. On his arrival in Montreal he entered the service of the firm of Gregory and McLeod. He was still there in 1784, at the time of the formation of the North-West Company. Here is how the Honorable Mr. Masson, in his interesting book, speaks of him:—*"The Partners of the North-West Company."*

"Of an energetic nature, a vigorous temperament, and an iron will, he was one of those men cut out for struggle and great enterprises. For some years he had rendered great service to his patrons who had conceived a high esteem for the young Scotchman. Up to that time his name had been unknown; but it was soon to be written in ineffacible characters in the history of the North-West, even as, later on it was stamped upon the barren cliffs of the Pacific coast, which he was destined to be the first to reach after crossing the vast solitudes of the West."

In 1789, Alexander MacKenzie was given command of the Athabaska district in the place of the factor Ross who had been killed two years earlier in a quarrel between the men of the two Companies. For a long time he had formed the plan of going northward in search of a large river, which the Indians said flowed into the Arctic Ocean. The Company was not in favor of such a journey, as it presented no promise of immediate and clear profit for its business. But young MacKenzie's determination was deep-rooted; he wanted, at all cost, to undertake that dangerous trip, even though he had to leave the Company in consequence. Finally, however, he obtained the consent of his colleagues, on the condition that the Company would suffer no loss thereby, and that the Northern districts would continue to be well governed.

Alex. MacKenzie had the good fortune to find, in his cousin Rodrick MacKenzie, an intelligent and faithful substitute, upon whom he could count without the least anxiety during his absence.

He, thereupon, began to prepare for his journey and, on the 3rd June, 1789, with four Canadians and one German, as companions, he set out.

In his account of his voyage to the Arctic Ocean, Alex. MacKenzie gives us the names of those faithful servants whose energy and devotedness contributed so largely to the success of his dangerous expedition. They were François Barrieau (1), Charles Doucette, Joseph Landry, Pierre Delorme and John Steinbuck.

Lake Athabaska, whence the explorers started, is connected with the Great Slave Lake by a very rapid river about two hundred miles in length. They went down this river in a light bark canoe loaded with provisions, arms and tools.

At that period of the year in those boreal regions, the sun remains constantly above the horizon; in fact, it might be said that during the months of June and July there is no night.

It is easy to understand how favorable such long days are to travellers who have lengthy marches to make. In those latitudes, during the summer, the variations of the temperature are less frequent than in the more temperate zones,— possibly a compensation for the apparently endless nights of the interminable winters.

Had Mackenzie's companions not been gifted with indomnitable courage, the information given them by the

(1) The name should be written Bériau. He married in the North-West, and left many descendants. There are several families of the name in Manitoba.

Indians would have sufficed to have caused them to turn back in their tracks. On all sides terrific pictures of the cruelty of the aboriginal inhabitants of the seashore were painted for them. They were told that they would never come back and that, if by any chance they escaped death, they would be *old men* when they would return, so great was the distance to the Ocean.

But nothing could shake their determination. Although neither they nor their Indian interpreters knew anything of the [illegible] they were going, still they advanced [illegible] urance as if they were walking long [illegible] Thus, scarcely three months after [illegible] had gone down the great river as [illegible] n, had taken possession of the region [illegible] and, and were all back, safe and soun [illegible] a. The great Mackenzie river, one [illegible] rivers of America, was discovered.

You imagine, very likely, that the Company would shower praise on the hardy explorer whose glory reflected upon its members? By no means. The Company not only did not congratulate him, but even it had harsh terms of blame to launch against his undertaking. As we have said, the Company existed solely for the fur trade. Outside of that business it recognized and knew nothing. This simple fact sets that great organization before us in a very different light.

"During the summer of 1790," says Hon. Mr. Masson, "Mackenzie came down to the Grand Portage to assist at a general meeting of the Gentlemen Partners, that was to decide upon the reorganization of the Company. His sojourn there was not of a character to encourage him to remain in the association, many of the members of which

did not seem to appreciate the relief in which his expedition to the Polar Sea had placed the Company. 'My expedition was hardly spoken of' he wrote to a friend, on the 16th July, 1790, 'but it is what I expected.' He left the Grand Portage with a sad heart, and returned to his post with a soul full of bitterness against his colleagues." (Les Bourgeois du Nord-Ouest, page 42.)

A high soul, like that of Sir Alex. Mackenzie, could not long remain satisfied with the life of a fur-trader; the sojourn in the fort is too monotonous, too stupefying, so to speak, to suit a man of thought and spirit.

* * *

As soon as America was discovered, the leading thought that occupied the navigators was to find a passage across the continent to the Western Sea. Christopher Columbus sought for it along the coast of Mexico, saying that if it did not exist, nature had erred. Others after him sought for it in the northern seas, until, after long years, they became certain that it did not exist.

Later on, the mariners who ascended the great rivers were not any more successful in reaching that Western Ocean. In fine, the sons of de la Vérendrye had stopped at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and de la Vérendrye, himself, had died as he was preparing to scale that formidable barrier. Since then no traveller had dared to risk such an undertaking. However, towards the end of the eighteenth century the Americans had pushed their explorations westward, and, in virtue of the right of first occupation, threatened to take possession of those splendid territories. It would have been to the Company's interest to have forestalled them in that, and, without the genius

of Alexander Mackenzie, it certainly could never have done so.

Cheered on by the success of his first expedition, Mackenzie resolved to cross the Rocky Mountain range and to reach the Pacific Ocean. It was a daring project; but he prepared well ahead for it. In 1791, he went to Europe to familiarize himself with certain knowledge, or facts, he was lacking in. Supplied with all the instruments needed in such a voyage, he returned to the North-West, and in the spring of 1793, he set out without any guide, accompanied only by six Canadian voyageurs and two Indian interpreters.

Among the Canadians who went with him on this expedition two had gone with him to the Northern Ocean in 1789 — Charles Doucette and Joseph Landry. The others were François Beaulieu, François Comtois, Baptiste Bisson and Jacques Beauchamp. (1)

We should read the interesting details of that perilous journey as related in Mackenzie's own diary.

To reach the Artic Ocean he had overcome the fears that are natural in one who ventures into an unknown and dangerous country. But in reality, in going down the Mackenzie river he had met with no dangerous passes such as those that awaited him in the defiles of the Mountains. To reach the North he had traversed barren steppes, desert moors, desolate-looking expanses. But there, at least, the traveller's foot was on sure ground. Here, at the entrance to the Mountains, it was a very dif-

(1) It is regrettable that we do not know from what Canadian parishes came these men, especially the two who went on both expeditions. These names deserve to go down to posterity. François Beaulieu settled down, later on, at La Crosse Island married a Montagnaise squaw, and left a large family that has been highly esteemed in the missions.

ferent thing. During four months, through those gorges and recesses, where wild torrents rushed down on all sides, he passed from one danger to another. Twice his men, done out with fatigue, were on the point of turning back and giving up the idea of reaching the Ocean. One day Mackenzie said to them:—"If you abandon me, I will continue the journey alone." These words gave them fresh courage, and they promised to follow him to the end.

On the 2nd July, a little less than two months after their departure, they reached the shores of the Pacific Ocean. There they saluted that "Western Sea," which, for two centuries, had been the dream of navigators and explorers.

Alexander Mackenzie, taking possession of that country in the name of Canada, carved upon the cliffs of the coast:—

"ALEXANDER MACKENZIE, from Canada, by land, the 22nd of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three."

Without taking one day to rest, Mackenzie and his men took the Mountain route again and were back at Athabaska towards the end of August.

Done out with the fatigue of such a journey, Mackenzie was ill all winter. In the spring he left for the Grand Portage, leaving forever the Upper Country. He continued, however, as a member of the Company till 1801, when he took it into his head to form a new association for the purpose of competing with the North-West Company — for which he never had any great love.

The other members of the Company who, after the time of Mackenzie, undertook expeditions of a general interest to the world, were Simon Fraser, Jules Maurice

Quesnel and David Thompson. They were the first to go down the Fraser river, and the north branch of the Columbia river, as far as the Ocean. By their discoveries they secured for our country the possession of vast and beautiful territories that are now in danger of being handed over to the Americans. Those hardy travellers evidenced an indomnitable energy and an astonishing perseverance; and their names shall remain fixed in history.

As to those who made long and wearisome journeys into the West for the sole purpose of establishing relations with new tribes of Indians, in the eyes of posterity, their merits are no greater than those of the other partners of the Company — for, beyond all doubt, they were all as brave and hardy as Corsairs.

About the year 1800, Chaboillez and Larocque went to the country of the Mandans, on American soil. (1) Theirs was a journey of hardships. On the banks of the Missouri they met Captains Clarke and Lewis, who had been sent by the American Government to explore the upper Missouri, and to cross the Rocky Mountains. Larocque had taken intoxicating liquor with him; Lewis warned him that he would not be allowed to give any of it to the Indians. Those poor Indians, in their ignorance, said to the whitemen who came into their country: "If you come to us with charitable intentions you would bring with you things that are of use to the Indians."

The Mandan chief said to Lewis:—"There are only two sensible men among you: the one who works iron and the one who mends guns." And, speaking to Larocque, he added: "Whitemen do not know how to live; they

(1) De la Vérendrye had taken the same trip sixty-two years earlier, but for a more noble purpose.

leave their country, in small bands; they risk their lives on the big lake and among Indian tribes that will take them for enemies. What use is the beaver for them? Can it keep them from sickness? will it follow them after death?"

What true philosophy from the mouth of an Indian! Larocque's attempt to establish relations with the Indians of the South was unsuccessful. Soon the Company gave up the project.

In 1790, after Alexander Mackenzie's journey to the North Sea, the Company, in a general meeting, at the Grand Portage, adopted, for nine years, a new constitution. By the withdrawal of some of the shareholders the interests of the Company were centered in the hands of ten partners. Several clerks, instead of having fixed salaries, received shares in the profits; these shares reached the half of the trading profits. This was a powerful means of stimulating the zeal and increasing the activity of the employees. They prepared for a powerful competition with the Hudson Bay Company. The latter, however, persisted for a long time in confining its operations to the seashore, and it was only at the end of the century that it stirred up sufficiently to enter into a struggle that drove it to within an ace of its ruin.

CHAPTER IV.

SUMMARY.

The North-West Company, an instrument of corruption for the Indians and for its own employees.— The Company's system was injurious to our Canadian companies and to the well-being of the Indians.

Once an old dealer in furs, who had belonged to the trading Company, asked Mgr. Provencher: "How comes it that all the old-time partners in the North-West Company, after having been very wealthy, died in poverty and left nothing to their children?"

"Ah!" replied the Bishop, "because, 'the devil's meal turns to bran.'"

The North-West Company, disregarding every sentiment of honor and humanity, blinded with the craving for riches, speculated upon the souls and bodies of the Indians even as the slave owners speculated upon the unfortunate African negroes. By its system of trade it worked knowingly and willingly to bring about the moral degradation of the Indian peoples of the West, by giving them floods of intoxicating liquor and inoculating them with the germs of every vice.

When Bishop Provencher went on the Red River mission in 1818, the very first thing that the Indians asked him to give them was rum. "They were surprised," says Mgr. Plessis, "when we replied that we had none."

Before the coming of that Company the Indians, guided by a sentiment of natural honesty, were scrupulous in paying with exactness their debts. The following facts demonstrate this. Five years after the conquest, an English trader had advanced goods to the Indians to the value of three thousand beaver skins. The following year he was paid most faithfully by all the hunters; but as one of those who had received credit had died during the winter, his relatives combined to pay his debt, in order that his soul might be freed from unrest in the life to come. They were convinced that, if his name remained on the merchant's books, his soul would never enjoy peace in the realm of souls.

About the same time, another trader, being unable to carry all the fur he had purchased to Montreal, piled the skins in a small hut, and the following year he returned for them and did not find one missing.

In a previous chapter we saw how, in 1775, the Indians had long resisted the solicitations of Frobisher, who wanted to prevent them from going to the Hudson Bay with their furs to settle the debts contracted the previous year.

In this chapter we will see how the partners and clerks of the North-West Company made a regular game of turning the Indians dishonest and how they even used violence to make them neglect the payment of debts and become thieves.

In Mr. McGillivray's diary, which Hon. Mr. Masson quotes in his work, "Les Bourgeois du Nord-Ouest," (page 26), that gentleman says: "I gave Hequimash (chief of a tribe) a roll of tobacco, and eight measures of powder, and I promised him a coat, when he would return in the spring, on the condition that he would not go to the

Hudson Bay that summer and would not send his furs there; he owes the English 45 *plus.*" (1)

Again, in the same diary, he says: "The Flag (Le Pavillon), another Indian chief, came to visit us, and during the first twelve days Indians come in daily, so that we have seen them all. About the half of them had been to the Hudson Bay during the summer and had got credit there; I am very much afraid that they feel like going to pay their debts in the spring. However, if they do so, it will be because I cannot prevent them, either by promises, or by threats, if my goods fail."

Thus it was that threats were added to promises and often blows to threats to convince the Indian that he was not obliged to remain honest. But more generally his scruples were overcome by making him drunk. And this was the Company's method during the thirty-seven years of its sway.

It is scarcely possible to form an idea of all the evil it did and caused to be done in the North-West. The older *voyageurs* long recalled the infernal scenes enacted in the forts when the Indians gathered in numbers and rum flowed freely. Then were there battles, murders, and the howling of wild beasts on the air. Often, amidst those savage orgies the clerks and guardians of trading posts ran the risk of their lives, and frequently had great trouble in escaping. No matter; for the sake of getting the furs they were ready to begin all over the next day the same scenes. Never could the

(1) *Plus* means a beaver skin, or its equivalent in other skins. A better word is *pelu*. You would say of an article, " it is worth one *plus*, two *plus*, or ten *plus*." The *plus*, or *pelu*, was a standard, like a dollar.

greatest success achieved by the Company in its transactions palliate such crimes.

It did not limit its system to the corrupting of the Indians, it was extended to all its surroundings; the whitemen, as well as the red-skins, fell victims to its rapacity.

Count Andréani, travelling in America in 1791, visited the Grand Portage, where he had an opportunity of learning how things were done in the North-West. In his diary he says:—"The employees of the Company are generally libertines, drunkards, and spend-thrifts, and the Company does not want any other kind. Such is the speculation on their vice that any employee, who shows any dispositions for economy or sobriety, is given the most fatiguing kind of work, until by dint of ill-treatment he can be converted to drunkenness and to love for the women who come to sell (themselves) for rum, blankets and ornaments. In 1791, there were over nine hundred employees of the Company who owed it more than the value of ten or fifteen years of their future wages," (*Voyage en Amérique*, by La Rochefoucault-Liancourt, vol. II., page 225).

That speculation of the Company was not an abuse that had accidentally slipped in: on the contrary, it was an essential part of its system. They calculated upon it to realize their immense profits.

The moment an employee showed any disposition to become extravagant, he was allowed every facility to obtain advances, so that he might become indebted to the Company. Once in that condition he became a regular slave, and had to elect between going to prison and blindly doing the will of his masters. The first instruction given to a clerk, on taking charge of a trading-post, was to see to it that the employees would have as little money as possible

to draw at the end of the year; his ability in that direction was relied upon; and that ability consisted in knowing how to turn the employee into a libertine and a drunkard.

The rum, which the Company bought in Montreal for one dollar a gallon, was sold to the employees for four dollars a quart, or sixteen dollars per gallon. This shows how easy it was, provided the employee had an inclination for drink, to bring his account up to fifteen of twenty pounds sterling for one article. All the goods for trading purposes were quoted at proportionate rates

Thus, instead of banking up a little money and improving their condition, the Northern *voyageurs* did not save a cent for their old age, and nearly all of them ended their days in misery. Any of them who had families in Canada generally left them in dire poverty. If, by chance, they came back to their own country, which did not often happen, they did so merely to drag out a miserable existence. The kind of life that they led in the West totally unfitted them for ordinary work on the farm, or for the exercise of any kind of trade.

As to the young men who went to the North-West, before being married, they nearly all settled there and married squaws,— that is, when they had the good luck of not leaving their bones in the lakes or on the prairies.

Hundreds and hundreds of our people have left their corpses on the wild deserts of the West. Some of them lost on the plains, died of hunger and fatigue, others perished with the cold, and again others were killed by the Indians. Sometimes they lost their lives in obeying the barbaric orders of leaders who treated them like slaves.

On one occasion, in a fort at the extreme north, a guar-

dian of the trading-post, addressing a guide, said:—"Take this canoe, and with six men, you will convey provisions to the next post."

"The river is very rapid," answered the guide, "and the canoe is not strong enough to resist the current. We will be drowned."

"You're a set of cowards," replied the guardian, "the canoe is strong enough; so, go ahead."

The seven men set out; two days later the guide, one Brousse, returned to the fort with only one man; all the others had been drowned in the rapids in which the canoe was smashed in two. With such a blind obedience we can easily imagine all that the Company got out of the employees.

During more than the three-fourths of the time the trading business was carried on amidst deadly quarrels that resembled more the operations of brigands than of honest traders.

To carry their point in all directions the Company had need of fighting men. It knew well how to mould them. It encouraged all its pugilists to commit deeds of violence on all outside traders who might venture into the country. Even those who had gained renown for their more brutal efforts were rewarded. Such exploits were what the men of the North gloried in. One of the great amusements of the Partners was to assist at those pugilistic scenes in which English and Canadian combatants smashed each other, as was done in the time of the Greeks.

The Company claimed and historians have since said that it was a public benefit that was rendered in hiring so many Canadians to work in the North-West. Even from that standpoint, we consider that it was something to be deplored, and that it caused Canada, in those days, injury

such as is now produced by our Canadian emigration to the United States.

A century ago Canada had as much need — and may be more need than to-day — of the bone and sinew of our youth. The beautiful lands in the valley of the St. Lawrence were still covered with virgin forests. We had to erect our parishes and to strengthen our position by colonization. Each Canadian that then left the country was a greater loss than would be twenty Canadians to-day. And, it was by hundreds and by thousands that the Company robbed our farming regions of these young men, for the number of the *voyageurs* was over two thousand, and each year some of them had to be replaced by fresh recruits.

If those thousands of our fellow-countrymen, instead of having squandered their energy and strength in the service and for the benefit of the fur-traders, had settled on farms, cleared up land, and raised large families, would not the service to the country have been preferable to that of which the Company boasts?

It is almost impossible for us to calculate the injury done by the departure of so many for the Indian regions. Persons who have admired the energy of the Northern traders must not have reflected seriously upon this phase of the question. For our part, looking at it in this light, we are forced to consider the Company more as a scourge than as a blessing for the country.

As to the Indian tribes, they lost as much as did the whitemen from the standpoint of their well-being. Their country was invaded and ruined by hunters who unceasingly, and at all seasons, slaughtered all their fur-bearing animals — young and old alike. The Company hired hunters — Iroquois and Algonquins — in the Indian

villages of Canada, and paid them a fixed price for the furs that they brought in. These Indians, having no interest in the preservation of game in a country through which they were only passing for the time being, destroyed entirely some of the richest classes of fur-bearing animals. The unfortunate natives, intimidated by the warlike reputation of the strangers and fearing to offend the Company, looked on at that wonton destruction without a word of protest.

Another thing, that helped greatly to impoverish and make miserable the Indians, was the facility with which they could get advances from the Company. It was a clever plan of taking advantage of the red-skin, whilst, at the same time, presenting an appearance of honesty. As these goods were advance a year ahead, they were sold at the highest price, and as the furs had to be waited for, during an entire year, they were paid for at the lowest price. Thus, the poor Indian, if not very successful in his hunt, had scarcely enough in the fall to pay his debt of the spring. If, then, a strange trader came along and offered the Indian more for his fur than he would get from the Company in paying his debt, a regular warfare insued. The Company would seize all the Indian's furs and then ill treat the trader who had dared to come into the country.

The following incident will show how little it took to excite the Company's jealousy and to cause it to resort to acts of violence.

One day, a man named Fidler, a surveyor in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company, had been sent to explore a point where they desired to open communications with Athabaska. Fidler had an Indian guide with him. The North-West Company denied the right of the Hudson Bay Company to a monopoly, but claimed the same for itself.

Suspecting Fidler of wanting to do some trading, the Company sent a fighting-fellow, called Larocque, to hunt him up and not to allow any stranger in the district. Larocque met the Indian, who was Fidler's guide, beat him fearfully and broke two of his ribs.

It was not necessary that an Indian should be in debt to the Company for the latter to punish him severely for selling furs to strangers. This was a crime that it never forgave, and the Indians were absolutely incapable of resisting those acts of violence against them.

To say that the North-West Company had been useful to the Indians and its own employees, one must know very little about it and its operations. It was rather a scourge, both morally and materially speaking, for them.

CHAPTER V.

SUMMARY.

Our Canadian *voyageurs* in the Upper Country.— Their engagement with the North-West Company.— The recruiting agents.—Departure from Montreal in canoes.— The journey.— Hard labor to which the hired men are subjected.— Regrets for having left Canada and their homes.— Arrival at the Red River.

Our *voyageurs,* who hired with the North-West Company, nearly all settled in the Upper Country; they married squaws, and their families constituted the roots of the *métis,* or half-breed, race of to-day. As these Canadian *voyageurs* played an important part in the history of the North-West, it may be well to devote a chapter to their story, in order that the reader may be made better acquainted with them.

The class of people with which the Company was careful to surround itself contributed greatly to its success in its trade with the Indians. Nearly all of its servants were French-Canadians. The Company, for many reasons, preferred them to any other nationality. They were brave, hardy, persevering and handy in the long journeys across the desert plains. Better than any other people they knew how to get out of difficulties. They were also very clever hunters; in fact, in that respect, they were not inferior to the Indians. But what won for them the hearts of the red men was their frankness, and the facility with which they learned the Indian languages. It is easy to understand that such servants were of incal-

culable use to the Company; nor was the Company sparing in promises when it wished to secure their services.

Every spring, a little while before the departure of an expedition, in Montreal and its suburbs, there were numbers of recruiting agents who went about hiring novices.

The old trappers, who had already been in the West, used to meet in the city, at the large fur depots, to prepare their provisions and load their canoes. For about fifteen days these "old prairie-wolves" enjoyed a series of merry-makings and feasts. They invited all their friends and they had a regular jollification. You would imagine that they were bound to spend their last cent and to start off empty-pocketed.

During those days liquor flowed in streams and the night always brought a ball. Each one told a story — true or ortherwise — of some adventure in the land of the Indians; mystery and the supernatural general formed the basis of the anecdotes.

According to the pictures painted by the hiring agents, the trip from Montreal to the Red River was nothing else than a continued picnic. The boating over the lakes and along the rivers, the open-air camping, the new and glorious scenery that unceasingly unfolded its panoramic attractions before the traveller, the hunt on the prairies—so abundant that the least experienced could, in a few hours, secure enough game for six months' provisions,— in fine, the freedom of the wilds, that dream of all young men of ardent spirit and restive under the yoke of authority; all these attractions were pictured in a manner calculated to dazzle the youthful Canadians and to make them dizzy with delight. These poetic descriptions were well prepared beforehand to intice all who were willing to lend an ear to them.

Generally it was during those days of revilry that the recruits were hired. The poor young country lads, who had never gone beyond the limits of their different parishes, looked with envy and admiration upon their former companions who had become *voyageurs*, who wore ornamented belts and moccasins (1), and were treated like princes — rolling in money.

Many of them would be heard saying: "I, too, will be a *voyageur,* and go into the Upper Country, and when I come back to the village they will feast me as they do these lads."

On the other hand, the Indian life had charms for them. They imagined that out in the wilds, freed from all restraint, dressed in Indian fashion, sleeping with them in wigwams, and hunting for a livelihood, nothing more could be desired.

When the days of merry-making were over and the time for departure had arrived, the recruits began to reflect and to regret their folly. In the warmth of their cups they had bound themselves without any calculation as to consequences; coming to their senses the poor lads would weep and beg of the Company to release them from their engagements and to take back the money they had accepted in advance. Vain regrets! The Partners were not men to be softened by tears. Those who knew the old-time fur traders knew that a beaver-skin was the only thing that could touch their hearts; moreover, they never consented to cancel a contract made with an employee. The service of a young Canadian was worth too much to them to give it up for mere sentimentality.

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(1) Moccasins are moose-skin shoes, ornamented generally with bright-colored embroidery of Indian design.

When the day for departure arrived, the new *voyageur*, willing or unwilling, had to get into a canoe and to bury his sorrow in his heart.

When the fleet was ready, a solemn "hurrah," from united voices, made the echoes ring, and, as Moore sang:

"Our voices keep tune
And our oars keep time,"—

while the loaded skiffs were launched on the stream and commenced to breast the current.

The hardest work was given to the novices. There, as in war, each one had to "win his spurs." The new hands, during their first year of service, were given the unpoetic nickname of "Pork-eaters." This expression originated in the complaints generally made by the young lads, who, when they found themselves, on a long journey, reduced to a fare of dried biscuits, clamored for meat.

The Canadians in our country districts, are accustomed to eating pork boiled in a soup. The countrymen, famished in consequence of the heavy work they had to do, always relished that dish. So was it with the young men; as soon as they found themselves deprived of the old home-made and savory food, they began, like the Hebrews who lamented for the onions of Egypt, to cry out: "If we only had some pork." During the entire two months of the trip from Montreal to the Red River, the same lamentation was kept up.

The daily rations for each man consisted in a quart of shelled Indian-corn and one ounce of grease. It was very little for a man, considering the roughness of the work and the length of the days. The crew never stopped for dinner.

The *voyageurs* in the Company's service were divided into different classes: that of clerks, that of interpreters, that of canoe pilots and that of oars men. (1)

The canoe pilots were divided into two classes — the pilots, or helmsmen, and the rowers, or oarsmen.

Each canoe, in starting from Canada, (the Province of Quebec of our day), apart from the crew of men (each with his baggage, limited to ninety pounds) carried six hundred pound of biscuits, two hundred pounds of salted meat, three bushels of beans, two tarpaulin-sails to cover the goods and protect against the rain, one regular sail, one hawser, or large rope, one axe, one cook-pot, one sponge — to take up the water that might leak into the boats or canoes, some rosin, hemp, or tow, and birch bark to mend the canoes in case of accident.

When, for a first time, a European laid eyes on these frail vessels, so heavily loaded that the gunwales were scarcely six inches above the water, his impression invariably was that, considering the dangers of the route to be followed, escape from a wreck was impossible; but the Canadian oarsmen knew so well how to handle the paddle and steer the canoe that rarely an accident occurred. (2)

On leaving Lachine (3) the *voyageurs* went as far as

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(1) The word canoe, used in those days generally, now applies only to small bark canoes, propelled and steered with paddles; the large boats, propelled with oars and built of wood, are what we, moderns, call shanty, or driving boats. But the translater retains the word canoe, as it was then the generic term for all river craft.

(2) Note that the author constantly speaks of oars and paddles and canoes, as if they were one and the same kind of propelling instrument. Oars are used in large wooden boats, and are worked in row-locks, at the sides; paddles are used in bark canoes, and handled, independent of any support.

(3) A town, nine miles above Montreal.

Ste. Anne's, at the western extremity of the Island of Montreal. Although the distance between these two points is only fifteen miles, still the first camping ground was always at St. Ann's — or Ste. Anne. Before leaving that place and really commencing their great journey, the *voyageurs* would go to the shrine of Good St. Ann, and place themselves under her protection. The next day they bade farewell to Canada, and their voyage was commenced. (1)

Many were the dangers along the route. To avoid the falls and the rapids numerous portages had to be made; and that meant carrying the provisions and canoes on their backs. Sometimes these portages were several miles in length. The men of the last class — that is to say the novices, or the "pork-eaters"— were always selected as the porters or carriers.

As soon as the canoe reached the foot of a rapid it was stopped about twenty or thirty paces from the shore, so as not to run upon any rocks that might work holes in its frail bottom.

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(1) The translater takes the liberty of here recalling the fact that, in 1804, Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, travelled up that way with a band of *voyageurs*, and under the charm of their romantic life, he wrote his immortal "Canadian Boat Song."

"Faintly as tolls the evening chime,
Our voices keep tune and our oars keep time.
Row, brothers, row; the stream runs fast,
The rapids are near and the day-light's past.

Soon as the woods on the shores grow dim,
We'll sing at St. Ann's our *parting* hymn:
Saint of this green Isle, hear our pray'r.
Grant us cool heavens and a favoring air, etc.

Ottawa's tide, this trembling moon
Shall see us float on thy surges soon, etc."

Without any hesitation the oarsmen jumped into the water; two of them held the canoe steady by its ends. If there happened to be a partner, or a clerk in the canoe, he was carried ashore on the shoulders of some stalwart riverman, while the others carried the cargo.

When the canoe was empty, six or eight men, carried it up the portage to the head. There, before putting it into the water again, it was thoroughly examined to see if it needed any repairs. The same precautions were used in loading as had been used in unloading it; two men, up to their arm-pits in the water constituted an anchor, and when everything was replaced, the oarsmen, all soaking wet, got in and began to paddle away.

In the spring time, when the floating ice is still on the rivers, when the breeze has still the chill of winter, and when the sun's beams are not yet strong enough to temper the air, a plung into the water and sometimes several hours in that position, are proceedings likely to cause unpleasant sensations to the one who has to undergo them. Yet to that cruel necessity were all the *voyageurs,* or oarsman, who travelled between Montreal and the Red River, subjected.

The carrying — with a thumb-line — the cargo from one end of the portage to the other, and the walking, had the good effect of making the blood circulate and of reviving the limbs that had been stiffened and benumbed by the icy waters.

A load, or package, generally weighed ninety pounds. A man of medium strength and accustomed to lifting such heavy weights could easily carry two of them at a time, Even some, solid fellows, who wanted to show off their strength, would carry as many as six packages in one trip. By means of a leather strap placed around the forehead

and thrown back over the shoulders, they held the loads on their back, and at a rapid pace would carry them several acres. (In the woods to-day, the shantymen and Indians call these straps, thumb-lines.) One José Paul had been long celebrated for his exploits of this kind. (1)

The paths that the *voyageurs* followed were sometimes scarcely passable for men who would have no loads to carry. Now, they would skirt along the edge of a rock at the foot of which yawned a precipice, again, they would cross swamps where their feet sank into the soft, slimy ground; and still again they would scale abrupt declivities, with their loads on their back.

From Montreal to Lake Huron, there were forty-four portages to pass. Further on, from Fort William to Fort Winnipeg, there were about as many. One of those portages was nine miles long; for this it was called the Grand Portage.

Apart from the fatigues caused by the heavy exertions, the *voyageurs* had to endure the bites and torments of myriads of mosquitoes, which, night and day followed them in clouds.

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(1) José Paul was a Canadian, from Sorel, in the Province of Quebec. His muscular strength was prodigious: the following incident is evidence enough of it. One day, in a Hudson Bay Company's store, a clerk wanted to have a trial of strength with him. In a corner of the shop were piled a lot of barrels of sugar, and among them had been slipped a barrel of shot—(lead). While José was chatting with some friends, the clerk, as if asking a service, told José to place the barrels he would indicate upon the counter. A hundred pound barrel was of slight weight in José's hands; he set the work to hand them up quickly. He suddenly detected the trick, for he got hold of the barrel of lead. Then, like Sampson lifting the gates of Gaza, he made a supreme effort, lifted the barrel and brought it down on the counter with a crash. The clerk's laugh vanished, for the boards were smashed into splinters, the floor was broken in, and the barrel rolled in the cellar. "Go, my little lad," said José, "and pick up your lead — shot."

It is generally about the end of June that these insects appear. People who have never travelled, in the month of June, in the northern regions, can form no idea of the tortures inflicted by these legions of winged enemies of man. They are so numerous and so blood-thirsty, that they kill some of the largest animals of the forest, such as the red deer and the moose. They get into their nostrils and choke them. It has even happened that horses and oxen have died by their tiny darts. At the approach of rain, when the sky is clouded and the atmosphere calm and heavy, mosquitoes come in clouds so thick that it is not possible to keep a candle lit; only by means of dense smoke can they be kept off, and not always.

In the day time the young novice, who is busy with his paddle, suffers enormously, loses lots of blood, and knows the fate in store for him if he dares to complain; at once the nickname of "pork-eater," like a plaster, is made to do service in closing him up. Wisdom and experience teach him that it is better to "grin and bear."

At night the *voyageurs* camp on the shore and sleep in the open air, exposed to rain, wind, and mosquitoes. Yet they had to hurry and take advantage of the few hours of darkness to rest, for the nights are short. They pitched their camps late and were off again by day-break. At the first faint glimmer of the dawn the guide gave the signal to rise.

It was not the cry of "Benedicamus Domino" (1) that the guide uttered; his signal was: "Lève, lève nos gens," or "Up, up, boys."

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(1) *Benedicamus Domino* is the prayer or salutation with which college boys and seminarians are awakened in the morning — it means "Let us Bless the Lord." In our modern shanties and on the drives, the foreman's cry: "Lève, lève, grand matin," or "Up, up, it is daylight."

The *voyageurs* then lose no time in folding the leader's tent, in putting the canoes in the water, and, after loading them, taking up their paddles to lay them down only at their breakfast time — when the next portage is reached.

In the canoes the helmsmen, or endmen, constantly kept their eyes on the oarsmen to prevent them from relaxing for a moment. The rapidity of the march, or journey, was calculated by so many hours to reach such or such a place; just as a railway train is now scheduled. The distance from Montreal to Winnipeg took two months.

Such was the apprenticeship that, for the first two months after their departure from Canada, our young Canadian *voyageurs* had to undergo.

CHAPTER VI.

SUMMARY.

Fresh divisions in the North-West Company.—Organization of the X. Y. Company. — Struggle to the death between the two Companies. — Fearful scenes enacted in the North-West.

Despite the evil designs of men, God always attains His own end, for He is Almighty, and can draw good out of evil. That which is bad remains charged to the evil-doer; and the good, by a miracle of Divine Goodness, is done without that the creature has any merit thereby — for his intentions were perverse.

The North-West Company wanted wealth, and God gave it to them; but, at the same time, He made use of the work done by them to carry into execution His own plans.

In ancient times, through motives of pride and ambition, the Romans sought to conquer the world: God allowed them to reap that glory. They did much evil among men; but, without knowing it, they prepared the ways for the propagation of the Gospel. God acted ever with the same great motive. Above all does He desire the glory of His Church and the salvation of souls — and to attain this two-fold end, He makes use of all that is in the world.

The North-West Company was a source of corruption for the Indians; but it discovered all the lands occupied by the Indians in the vast territories of the North-West; it explored that country as far as the Arctic Ocean, in the North, and as far as the Pacific Ocean, in the West,

Everywhere it marked out roads, built forts, organized systems of safe travel over prairies, through forests, across lakes and along rivers. It undertook all these great works under the inspiration of a desire to become wealthy and to enjoy, later on, a life of ease; and all these things, in the designs of God, were destined to help the missionaries who were soon to penetrate into those wild regions, and to carry the "good news" to the infidel tribes that inhabited them.

We will now return to the Company, and follow its progress. We have seen that, immediately after the first organization, it had a struggle with a certain number of traders who were dissatisfied with the shares they had in the association; that, in 1787, tired of the fruitless warfare between them, the two parties combined, and that, in 1790, they reorganized the Company, for nine years, on a fresh basis.

During that lapse of time there were still many clashings, murmuring and inklings of division among the Lords of the Northland; but the interest of self-preservation was sufficiently strong to keep them united, and, after the manner of politicians, discipline was sufficiently respected to prevent a few malcontents from breaking loose; they needed to retain all their patronage in Canada, so as not to injure their business; they, therefore, were careful not to allow the noise of any of their quarrels or differences to be carried beyond the limits of the Indian countries.

Yet, in 1795, four years before the agreements of 1790 were to expire, a few partners, more impatient than the others, determined to separate from their associates, and to form a new company. Powerful and well organized as it was, the North-West Company was seriously disturbed

in presence of the threatened divisions. Those who separated from it were not numerous, but they were able, energetic and determined men. Moreover, as they had been trained in the old Company's school, they were in no way scrupulous as to means to be adopted, and it was likely to be a question of "diamond cut diamond."

Another matter that caused the North-West Company considerable anxiety was the attitude which then recently the Hudson Bay Company had begun to assume. Threatened with famine, and finding that the Indians no longer came to their far off factories, the Hudson Bay Company awoke from its olden lethargy and began to advance into the interior of the country. Already had it commenced to build Forts in close proximity to those of the North-West Company, and to show a determination to insist on the rights accorded by its charter. The new Company thus arose at a very critical moment, since the old one had then need of all its forces to retain the ground that it had taken possession of.

Alexander Mackenzie, whose energy, ability and amiable character had won for him the good will of the partners of the old Company, remained with it till 1799. But that year he resigned and sailed for England. In 1801 he returned, with his knighthood, and went back to the North-West. There he placed himself at the head of the new organization, which was called the X. Y. Company.

The old Company, which therefore had pretended to despise what they called "the little traders," understood that with Sir Alexander Mackenzie at its head, and his prestige at its service, their rival became formidable. War was to be the order of the day; but a war such as the North-West had never seen the like.

From that moment forward, in the land of the Indian,

one long series of crimes and brigandage was kept up. The picture of the scenes enacted defies pen and pencil. The quarrels of 1785-86 were mere petty diffrences compared to them. Rum became the only standard of exchange between the Indians and the traders, and you would have to read the diaries kept by the clerks at the trading-posts, during those years of pandemonium, to form an idea of the class of liquor given to the Indians. Here are a couple of extracts from one clerk's diary:—

"I gave some Indians who came to the Fort four two-gallon barrels of rum and one three-gallon barrel, I was alone with my servant G.... The Indians were all armed.... we were nearly being killed...."

On another page he writes:

"We had a lot of trouble last night, the Indians were in liquor; they quarrelled between themselves.... We all came to blows."

But the debasing of the Indians, by means of drunkenness, was a mere venial sin compared to the other crimes of these men, who would not hesitate at assassination for the sake of a few beaver skins.

In the year 1800, Frederick Schultz, a clerk in the old North-West Company, had command of a trading-post near Lake Nepigon. He had in his service a young Canadian named Lebeau, who, during the previous winter had made fellowship with the servants of the Hudson Bay Company. In the spring time Lebeau decided to join them and go down to the sea with them. When Schultz heard this he said: "If that scoundrel wants to go off I'll know how to prevent him." He got a sharp-pointed dagger, hid it in his cloak, and started to find Lebeau at the Hudson Bay Company's Fort. The latter, when he saw Schultz coming, was frightened and *pretended* to jump out by a window. Schultz, on seeing

this movement, drew his dagger and struck Lebeau such a blow that he died from the effects of it that day.

The North-West Company, instead of blaming Schultz for the crime, kept him in its employ and even promoted him.

At Fort Cumberland, in 1796, an Indian, who had been annoyed to the extreme by a clerk, had the misfortune, in defending himself, to mortally wound his persecutor. Immediately and without any form of trial, the guardians of the Fort put two Indians of the same band to death; one of them was shot and the other was hanged to a tree —as an example for others.

In 1802, in a little Fort on Pike River, two employees of the North-West Company — Comtois and Roussin — for revenge, killed an Indian and his wife, because two years before the Indian woman had taken part in the murder of a friend of theirs. The husband vainly begged for mercy from his executioners; vainly he told them that he was innocent in the matter; he and his wife were slaughtered with clubs. Numerous cases of this class might be cited.

We need not be surprised at such crimes being committed by under-strappers, when we know that, a few years later, Archie McLellen, a Partner of the North-West Company, had an officer of the Hudson Bay Company, named McKeveny, brutally assassinated at the Lake of the Woods. Reinhard, the one who committed the murder, on McLellen's order, was condemned by a Canadian court to be hanged, while the Partner purchased his own exoneration. (1)

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(1) In 1818, when Mgr. Provencher went up to his mission, he saw McKeveny's skeleton lying on a pile of branches, on the island, where he had been murdered. His executioners did not even bury his remains.—(Letter of Mgr. Provencher.)

We will give in another chapter the details of that murder. At the time it made quite a noise in Canada, and it helped greatly in making known to the world the spirit that animated the North-West Company.

During the winter of 1801, in the Athabaska district, Mr. John McDonnell represented, as superintendent, the old North-West Company, and Mr. de Rocheblave, the new one.

The former had in his service a clever trader, of Herculian proportions, named King. Mr. de Rocheblave was assisted by a young Canadian, named Lamothe, a courageous and active lad, son of a very good family, but much younger and less experienced than King.

During the course of the winter, two Indians, that were in debt to both Companies, came to notify the traders, saying that their band had deputed them, that they had furs in their camp at a distance of about four or five days' walk from there. King was sent to bring the furs belonging to the old Company, and Lamothe to get those belonging to the new one. Both had received instructions to make as much haste as possible and to maintain the rights of their respective employers.

On reaching the Indian camp each one of them set to work to gather up all the furs that were due to his own Company. But, as King had more servants to help him, he took possession of all the packages, except one, which Lamothe got from an Indian. King and his men went to Lamothe's tent and ordered him to give up that package, and if he did not do so freely they would take it by force.

Lamothe, who was determined to defend to the last his master's property, notified King that if he touched that package of furs he would do so at his own risk and peril. King started to put his threats into execution, when La-

mothe fired his pistol and killed the other in his tracks. King's men wanted to avenge his death, but the Indians interfered and declared that he only got what he deserved.

When it suited its purpose the old Company ordered the committing of murders; but now, when one of its own men was the victim, it raised a howl of distress. A thousand attempts were made to get hold of Lamothe, but it was only in 1804, three years later, that he fell into the Company's hands. He was cast into prison, where he remained until the subsequent union of the two Companies. Then only was Lamothe set free; but there was no longer any idea of having him tried.

That Company, which denied to the Hudson Bay Company a right to the trading monopoly that it had received by Royal Charter, claimed the same right for itself, although it had no title to show — it sought to become queen and mistress of the entire expanse of the North-West.

In 1801, Mr. Dominique Rousseau, of Montreal, equipped canoes that he sent, under the command of Mr. Hervieux, his clerk, to Lake Superior. These canoes were loaded with trading goods. Rousseau expected to make a good profit out of his little cargo, with the Indians of the Grand Portage. As a British subject he had just as much right to trade with the Indians as had the Partners of the Noth-West Company.

One would think that this enterprise on the part of a simple individual would not be of sufficient importance to stir up the jealousy of the great Company. Hervieux, confident in his right, went and pitched his tent within an acre of the Company's Fort.

Scarcely was he three hours there, when he saw three officers of the Company coming towards him. One of

them, Duncan McGillivray, began by telling him that he would have to get out of there at once, or else they would make him go. Hervieux replied that, as he had as much right as they had to trade there, he would not go until he saw their title to the place. However, after some slight amount of argument, he said that, to avoid any further annoyance, he would take his tent to the place that they would indicate. McGillivray and his companions went back to the Fort to report what had been done.

The doubt that Hervieux expressed regarding the Company's rights appeared to them a crime worthy of any punishment. They went back to his tent, where he had not quite completed the packing of his goods, and they cut it into pieces with their daggers. "There's for you," they said, "you wanted to see our titles, you have them now. And if you dare go farther inland we will cut your throat." Not content with destroying his tent, they spoiled his goods and ill-treated some servants who had bought things from him. They took them away from the purchaser, broke them up, to teach them to never again buy anything from a strange trader.

Hervieux was obliged, after having lost all his goods through the action of the Company, to return thirteen hundred miles to Montreal.

Mr. Rousseau took an action-at-law against McGillivray, but he only succeeded in getting some slight compensation for his heavy losses.

In 1806, Rousseau made another attempt to trade in the Indian country. He took a Mr. Delorme into partnership and sent him to the North-West with two canoes loaded with merchandise.

To avoid all trouble with the Company, Delorme, once he reached Lake Superior, took the Grand Portage route

which the North-West traders had abandoned, to go settle at the new Fort William. He took precautions to pass without being seen by the people at the Fort, but he had not calculated upon the Company's watchfulness which kept sentinels placed on vedette.

After a four days march, Delorme was joined by one McKay, a member of the Company, who, with a dozen men, set about felling trees across the trail so as to make it impassible. They thus closed up all the paths and all the streams both ahead of Delorme and behind him, so that he could neither advance nor return. At last Delorme and his companion were regular prisoners, and were forced to abandon their goods, which they had to sell to the Company at the prices paid for them in Montreal.

Rousseau was the last trader who attempted alone and without protection to send goods into the North-West.

As we now see, the Company of the North-West, which cried out against all monopoly, had, without either charter or recommandation from any one, taken possession of the Indian country to the exclusion of all other British subjects and had made use of any and all means to retain its position.

It is well that the reader should remember these facts, in order to properly understand and properly judge the series of events that we shall treat of later on.

CHAPTER VII.

SUMMARY.

New organization of the North-West Company. — Means employed to stimulate the zeal of the subordinates. — Timidity of the Hudson Bay Company's servants. — Inequality of the struggle between the two Companies.

The warfare carried on between the two Companies in the North-West could not but end in ruin. The Partners of the old Company understood this very well, and for some time they had been desirous of coming to an understanding. But Simon McTavish, their principal agent, having had his pride stung at the time of the separation, had thought well to refuse all arrangements with the new Company, which he pretended to hold in utter contempt. To crush it out he had made superhuman exertions. His efforts to extend his Company's operations in every direction had not always been crowned with the success that he expected. The Partners, his colleagues, had frequently complained without, however, going as far as to openly blame him in their large official meetings. They consequently awaited a favorable opportunity to come to an understanding with him, when death came, in the month of July, 1804, to put an end to the matter, by taking away Simon McTavish.

Thenceforth the union of the two Companies, so much desired by both sides, for both were weary of the fruitless struggle, became an easy matter.

The most conspicuous and most important personage among the Partners was, without question, Sir Alex. Mac-

kenzie. Proposals of union were submitted to him, and, from the 5th November, 1804, all difficulties were cleared away, peace was signed, and the Great North-West Company was reorganized on a new basis.

Taught by the regretable scenes of the past few years, the Partners in the North-West Company, while reorganizing, were careful, by means of special clauses, to prevent any future division.

It was ordained in the rules that any member, who, under the new conditions, desired to withdraw from the Company, would receive, for seven years, half of the profits of his investment in the Company, without that he should have any service to do or any responsibility to incur; but, at the same time, he was forbidden, under pain of a fine of five thousand pounds sterling, to have any interest, direct or indirect in any other organization doing a trading business on the same territory as the North-West Company. Thus the retiring Partner was in no way tempted to go into any undertaking that might militate against the Company's interests.

In the case of a Partner's death, his heirs could not succeed him without accepting the same restrictions and obligations that he had.

In the new organization the aggregate of the capital was divided into one hundred shares. A considerable portion of those shares were held by commercial firms in London and Montreal, on account of advances made by them to the Companies. The other shares were held by individuals.

Out of seventy-five shares assigned to the old Company, thirty were held by one commercial firm in Montreal. Of the other twenty-five shares, assigned to the new Company, nineteen belonged to Montreal and London firms;

the balance were distributed among the "Wintering Members." (1)

The members, that is to say those who had one or more shares in the Company, were to meet each year, in the month of July, at Fort William, on Lake Superior.

There it was that the business of the Company was regulated. All questions were decided by a majority of the votes. Each share gave a right to one vote; the absent shareholders could be represented by proxy. There and then all plans for the coming year were agreed upon and all accounts of the past year were regulated.

The "Wintering Partners" were bound to make a detailed statement to the meeting of all events or transactions in their respective departments since the last general meeting.

Those who had shown themselves indifferent to the Company's interests were publicly blamed in open meeting; while those who had achieved success, no matter by what means, were promoted. This system was well calculated to promote emulation; but no safeguards were afforded the respect due to law and justice. The desire to deserve public praise and to rise to "honorable" positions in the Company filled the subalterns with an emulation unequalled save by that of the leaders.

As we have already remarked, the Partners who lived in Canada desired to preserve a good reputation in the eye of the public, and they watched carefully that no complaint against the Company should ever be ventilated in Montreal or Quebec. But it was otherwise with the Part-

(1) The French term is "Associés hivernants" —meaning the members of the Company, or shareholders, who lived in the North-West, spent the winter there, and looked after the active or practical end of the business.

ners who lived in the North and spent the entire year a thousand miles and more away from all civilized society. The great distances and the difficulties of communications secured them against public opinion, above all when they knew that as long as they brought in lots or furs they would never be criticised by their superiors.

It is easy to understand how little dread there was of the law in those distant regions and with what ease wrongs could be done that were never to be known to the courts.

After their union the two Companies took great care to cast a veil over all the abominable scenes enacted in the days of their quarrels; but Sir Alexander Mackenzie has spoken, to some extent, about them in his works, and tradition has handed down the story of the remainder.

From its formation, in 1784, to its reorganization, in 1804, the North-West Company had in reality to suffer only intestine divisions. No individual trader was in a position to measure strength with it. All such like competition had no more effect on it than has the wave upon the rock which it lashes. The Hudson Bay Company had not so far bothered it much; but, from that period forward, it is with this giant foe that we will find it in a struggle to the death. Facts would seem to establish that the intention of the North-West Company was to make the Hudson Bay Company abandon its trading business and to reduce it to a condition in which it would have to give up its charter rights.

The North-West Company circulated all over that it did nothing more than retaliate on the Hudson Bay Company. It is like the man who was brought to court because his dog had killed a rabbit and who pleaded, as a

justification, that it was the rabbit that had attacked the dog. (1)

All, who are acquainted, no matter how slightly, with the history of the Hudson Bay Company, know that its employees never counted bravery among their virtues, and that its traders were most pitifully timid. It is well known that, despite the premiums offered to those who would leave the seashore and penetrate into the interior, they never found one man to respond to such alluring solicitations. If, for a century its operations were confined to the Hudson Bay, it was because its employees obstinately declined to go, as did the French, into the Indian countries.

It is certain that the superior officers of the Company, in England, desired to have the regions inhabited by the Indians explored, and that they offered large sums for that purpose.

On the 15th May, 1682, the managing Board wrote to John Bridgor, at Fort Nelson, as follows:—"Make an establishment on the river for your safety; but at the same time, make haste to go inland; make discoveries and establish there commercial relations with the Indians."

In the following year (1683), the London Committee renewed its urging and wrote thus to Henry Sergeant, one of the Governors:—"We instruct you to select from among our servants the most robust and the best versed in the Indian languages; you will send them into the interior of the country, to draw the Indians by fair treatment and conciliatory manners, and thus bring them to deal with us." In reply the Governor wrote to London that the servants refused to undertake the journey.

(1) The number of the Hudson Bay Company's employees was scarcely the third of that of the North-West Company.

Two years after the order given to Sergeant, on the 22nd March, 1685, things being in the same state, the Committee wrote again, as follows:—

"We have learned that our servants refuse to go into the interior of the country on account of the danger that they dread, but also, perhaps, on account of the small encouragement given to them. Make it known that the wages of those who are willing to make the journey will be £30 sterling."

The hope of rewards had no better effect, for on the 24th August, 1685, the Governor of the Hudson Bay replied to the London Committee that his men refused the premiums and that they preferred to return to England rather than venture among the Indians. "None of them," he says, "will consent to make the journey, despite all the means I have used."

Such the heroes that, in 1700, the Hudson Bay Company had in its service.

Had matters change a century later, in 1800? No: at that period the employees of the Hudson Bay Company were not any more war-hardened, for, during a whole century, they did nothing beyond trading with the Indians around the walls of the forts.

In 1733, Joseph Robson, an employee of the Hudson Bay Company, reported that, "when the Indians came to supply the forts with the products of their hunt, the suspicious prudence of the Governor of Fort York was such that he would not permit more than two or three Indians to enter the Fort together, and only very rarely consented to allow the Indian chiefs to spend the night within its enclosure." Yet that Fort was protected by nineteen cannons.

Robson adds that while he was at Fort York, he once

risked himself on a forty mile expedition into the interior.

It was only in 1774, after Frobisher's jouruney to Churchill river, that the Hudson Bay Company made its appearance on the banks of the Saskatchewan, and that it took courage to break through the circle that bound it to its icy regions. Nineteen years later it advanced as far as the Red River, but always with the same class of men, proverbial for their awkwardness, unable to steer a canoe and perpetually afraid to meet the hardy Canadian traders who were men of unsurpassed ability and of wonderful influence over the Indians.

Unwarlike by instinct and understanding the danger of measuring its strength with a Company much stronger than itself, both as to numbers and as to the fighting qualities of its men, the Hudson Bay Company naturally was chary of any aggression and confined itself to the safeguarding of its own business.

As soon as the North-West Company's traders came in contact with the employees of the Hudson Bay Company in the interior of the country, they displayed the greatest antagonism.

Apart from their numerical superiority the men of the North-West Company were so devoted to their masters that they believed themselves obliged to follow their every instruction, no matter how illegal it might be.

Thence forward all the Hudson Bay Company's employees became the targets for a serious of most undeserved attacks.

The following incidents will give us an idea of the manner in which the North-West Company considered all rivalry in trade.

In the month of May, 1806, a Hudson Bay Company's trader happened to be with some men at a place called

Bad Lake, within the limits of Fort Albany. Certainly, this was a part of the country that belonged to the Hudson Bay. Corrigal was the trader's name. The North-West Company had erected a trading post in the neighborhood of Corrigal's establishment and had placed a clerk named Holdane and some servants there. One night, while Corrigal and his men were asleep in their house, Holdane's men came along, seized him and his servants, pillaged their store, which contained four hundred and eighty beaver skins, and carried off all the furs to their own place. In the spring time they carried them down to the Grand Portage, where the North-West Company received and accepted them with all the other skins.

Holdane's justification of his conduct was expressed to Corrigal in these words:—"I came out here to get furs, ... and I mean to take them wherever I can find them."

A similar robbery took place a short time after this at a post near Red Lake. The post was broken into by eight men, armed with pistols and knives, who threatened to murder all the Hudson Bay Company's servants, if they were not allowed to take all the furs in the store. A few days later they smashed in the same store and carried off a considerable quantity of cloth, highwines, tobacco, amunition, etc.

In the fall of 1806, a trader named John Crear, in the service of the Hudson Bay Company, was in charge, with five men, of a place called High Falls (Grosse Chute), near Lake Winnipeg. One evening two canoes appeared, manned by North-West Company's servants under one Alexander McDonell, who camped near Crear's trading post. The following morning four of Crear's men went out to fish at about a mile from the camp. As soon as they were gone McDonell went with his men to

accuse Crear of having bought furs from Indians that were in the North-West Company's debt. That was considered a grave crime. All the Partners and clerks of the North-West Company prevented the Indians from paying their debts to the Hudson Bay Company, and in their case, such was not considered dishonest; but when an Indian owed them anything, woe to the trader who, even in good faith, bought any of his furs.

McDonell ordered Crear to deliver up to him the skins he had purchased from the Indians, otherwise he would take them by force. On Crear's refusal, he burst in the store door. William Plowman, the only one of Crear's followers present, sought to prevent him from getting in, but he was knocked down by one of McDonell's men, while another one of them floored Crear with his gun. As McDonell prevented his man from firing the gun, the latter hit Crear with the butt-end of the fire-arm, and laid him out bleeding — meanwhile McDonell gave Plowman a dangerous wound with his dagger. During all this scene, the employees of the North-West Company were robbing the store, taking possession of all the furs, a quantity of beef and salt pork, dry meat, and a new canoe.

In February, 1807, the same McDonell sent one of his clerks and some men to again attack Crear. They beat him and his followers most unmercifully, and took away a large quantity of their furs. And, what was still worse, they forced them, on pain of death, to sign a paper acknowledging that they had freely handed over those furs to the North-West Company.

In 1808, John Spencer, a Hudson Bay official, had command of a trading post at Cariboo, in the neighborhood of another post belonging to the North-West Company. In the spring, William Linklater, an employee of the

Hudson Bay Company, was sent to meet some Indians and get their furs. On his way back, he was met by Duncan Campbell, a "Wintering Partner" of the North-West Company. The packages of furs were tied on a sled. Campbell summoned Spencer to give up the furs, and, on the latter's refusal, he drew his knife, cut the traces of the sled, and ordered his men to carry the furs to the North-West Company's Fort. One of Campbell's men caught Spencer by the snow-shoes and held him down on the ice, while the others drew the furs to the Fort. These skins were taken to Lake Superior, as the product of trading and the Hudson Bay Company never got one cent of compensation for them.

On another occasion, at La Crosse Island, the same Campbell attacked two other employees of the Hudson Bay Company and took their furs from them in the same manner.

Some of their companions, who came to their assistance, were beaten off, with considerable blood-shed, by a greater number of North-West Company employees.

In 1809, Fidler, a Hudson Bay clerk, was sent, with eighteen men, from Churchill, to establish a trading post at La Crosse Island. During the first winter, he had some success, but he afterwards had to face numberless difficulties. Several times before had officials of the Hudson Bay Company tried to do trading in that locality, where beaver is plentiful, but each time they were forced to give up their undertaking. The methods employed against Fidler will explain their lack of success.

During the first winter, Fidler's competitor was one McDonnell, who was afterwards replaced by Robert Henry. McDonnell was not sufficiently disposed to set all the laws of uprightness and justice at defiance. Henry,

in turn, was replaced by Duncan Campbell, because he was too conciliatory.

The North-West Company had secured, at La Crosse Island, what they called the "attachment" of the Indians; which means that the Company held them through fear, and so much so that the sight of an employee of that organization sufficed to terrify them.

To keep them in that state of slavery, Campbell increased the number of his men at La Crosse. He thus wished to prevent the Indians from having any dealings with the Hudson Bay Company's traders and, at the same time, to frighten Fidler by the presence of a force ever ready to crush him, should he attempt to defend himself. They built a small house near his fort, so that no Indian could go in unnoticed. A gang of professional fighters was lodged there — not only to keep an eye on the natives, but also to harrass, day and night, the Company's men.

Their fire-wood was stolen, their gardening was spoiled, they were bothered in the hunt, their fishing lines were carried off at night, and their fishing-nets, their main source of livelihood, were cut into pieces. The blackguards, thus left to watch Fidler, went from one deed of violence to another, and, gaining more and more confidence on account of the absence of any resistence, they ordered the Hudson Bay men, in a formal manner not to stir out of their Fort again. They accompanied their order with such acts of violence that Fidler's men abandoned the post, and the entire establishment was immediately burned down. (1)

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(1) All these facts, taken from the works of Lord Selkirk, have been corroborated by the testimony of old traders whom we knew, and by a tradition that was still alive at the Red River, when we arrived there, in 1866; they may, therefore, be accepted as most authentic and worthy of belief.—AUTHOR'S NOTE.

Five years of such acts of violence sufficed to ruin the Hudson Bay Company's trade. In 1809, the shares in England, after having been quoted at 250 per cent., fell to 50 per cent. During all that time, the North-West Company went on growing; it was at the zenith of its prosperity, its Partners, in Canada, were "on top" everywhere, when an unforeseen event took place, which entirely changed the aspect of affairs and, in one moment, caused all the luck of these Lords of the North, to vanish.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUMMARY.

Appreciation of the events that constitute the subject matter of the following chapters.— Difficulty in picking out the truth from the mass of contradictory stories. — Lord Selkirk's voyage to Americca, and his sojourn in Montreal. — His return to London.— His negotiations with the Hudson Bay Company.— The attitude taken by the North-West Company.

The events that shall be related in the following chapters have been appreciated in various ways by different historians down to the present. The two contending parties, to defend their respective causes, wrote regular pleas, and those who have read them have accepted them as true the facts just as they have been presented.

In order to discover the truth in all those contradictory stories of that unhappy period — stories affirmed upon oath by some and denied (also upon oath) by others — we were obliged to ransack a number of other documents relating to the history of that epoch. (1) But this was not sufficient; the places where the events described by the Companies took place had to be visited; the topography of those places had to be examined; a mass of comparisons had to be made; tradition had to be consulted; in a word, it meant the work of long years. It was only after having learned all the antecedents of the North-West Company, all the crimes that have remained

(1) This is what we did when writing the life of Mgr. Provencher, a contemporaneous witness of the struggles between the two Companies.

hidden and were about to sink into oblivion, that it was possible for us to bring to bear upon the subject a judgment that may, perhaps, seem severe to some, but which is, nevertheless, most strictly impartial.

In 1809, the North-West Company was at the climax of its power and glory, whilst its rival was almost ruined.

"Half ruined by the struggle it had to sustain," writes Hon. Mr. Masson, in his 'Histoire des Bourgeois du Nord-Ouest,' page 115, "it had been almost completely pushed back to the shores of the Hudson Bay, and everything promised, for the Canadian traders, a period of prosperity that would compensate them for all the sacrifices they had made, when, from a quarter undreamed of, burst forth an unexpected storm that was destined to make their powerful Company disappear."

All the indemnity that the Company merited was the punishment of its crimes, and it was Divine Providence who took in hand the inffliction thereof, by making it disappear completely and suddenly from the country, as we have said in a previous chapter, whose scourge it had been.

"For some years," continues Hon. Mr. Masson, "Thomas Douglass, Earl of Selkirk, a descendant of one of the great Scottish families, a man of broad and philanthropic ideas, as well as a distinguished man of letters, interested himself in his fellow-countrymen, the Highlanders, who, among their mountains, led lives of privation and misery, without any expectation of amelioration in their condition. He sought to find them a less difficult existence in the English colonies in America, and he had succeeded, despite great obstacles and at the cost of considerable personal sacrifice, to send several hunudred of them to Prince Edward Island.

"After hard beginnings, the colony began to rise; the colonists soon became prosperous, and their descendants, to-day, occupy the lands whereon, in 1803, their fathers settled and sought from American soil a relief from the miseries they had endured at home."

It is with pleasure that we quote these passages, for, coming, as they do, from a friend of the North-West Company, they have a special weight, and they serve to make known the fine qualities of heart that characterized Lord Selkirk, whom some have sought to brand as ambitious and egotistical.

On account of the part he played in the founding of the Red River colony, that Lord is one of the most remarkable personages that figure in the annals of Canadian history.

Thomas Douglas, fifth Earl of Selkirk, was the seventh son of Dunbar, the fourth Earl of Selkirk. He was born on the 5th June, 1771, at the family castle, on the Island of St. Mary's Kirkendbrighshire, Scotland. The family name is illustrious in Scottish history.

From his youth, Thomas Douglas gave evidence of remarkable qualities, which a high education perfectioned. He was passionately fond of books on travels and expeditions — especially those that related to America — and, while yet a young man, he had dreams of colonization.

As all his other brothers had died before coming of age, he succeeded to his father's title, when the latter died, in 1779.

The 24th November, 1807, Lord Selkirk married Miss Colville, daughter of James Colville of Ocheltrie, a gentleman possessed of a large fortune, and a member of the Hudson Bay Company. (1)

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(1) Lord Selkirk's wife had been, from 1818 until the death of her husband in 1821, a benefactress of the Catholic missions on the Red River.

After his marriage, being master of an immense fortune derived from his father and from his wife, he gave full play to his colonizing projects.

In 1809, he wished to visit the United States and Canada, where his reputation as a distinguished man of large and elevated views had already preceded him. In Montreal, very naturally, he was the guest of the Partners of the North-West Company, who, according to the language of that day, were masters of the city in which the Scotch element ruled.

As Lord Selkirk wished, during his journey, to glean information regarding all parts of America most suitable for colonization, he desired to learn all about the Red River district: the opportunity was favorable, and he took advantage of it.

The North-West Partners, mistrusting and suspicious, did not give their secrets to every one. With strangers to the Company, they were very reserved regarding their business; but with one of their fellow-countrymen they allowed themselves to go farther than was customary, and they gave him sufficient information for the purposes of his scheme — that of colonization.

From them, he learned that the valley of the Red River was a fertile region, that the climate there was not more severe than in Canada, and that hunting and fishing were plentiful. A few old Partners, more suspicious than others, were afraid that they had been too confident and had overstopped the limit of prudence; still, for the time being, they gave expression to no harsh words against their illustrious fellow-countryman.

After visiting a part of Canada, Lord Selkirk returned to England, to there perfect and ripen his plans of emigration to America.

In a pamphlet, published in London, in 1817, by a Partner of the North-West Company, Lord Selkirk is accused of having had no other object than the ruin of their Company when he obtained such minute information about the Red River, and that he had abused of the cordial hospitality that had been shown him.

It needs but slight reflection to see how false such an accusation, based only on suppositions, really was.

Lord Selkirk's aim, in all the conversations he had with the Partners of the North-West Company, was very naturally to obtain information, not about the fur-trade, but about the means necessary to realize his long-meditated plan of founding Scotch colonies in America. Had he wished to double or triple his vast fortunes through the fur-trade, he had only to have entered the North-West Company, into which his fellow-countrymen would have been happy to have received him, and to thereby augment their strength. That would have been shorter and easier than to have sent colonists to the Red River, to help make war on a Company whose power was formidable. Lord Selkirk wanted to try at the Red River that which, in 1805, he had attempted with success on Prince Edward Island.

But we likewise understand that he wished, from the start, to insure the success of an enterprise in which he risked not only his life-repose, but also his immense fortune. So, with his rare intelligence, Lord Selkirk saw that the only way to ensure the livelihood of a colony on the banks of the Red River was to secure as large a tract of territory as possible in the most advantageous section in order to there help in establishing his unhappy Scottish fellow-countrymen.

In order to get possession of that territory, he had to

become a large shareholder in the Hudson Bay Company. His father-in-law, Mr. Colville, who had great influence with the Company, backed up his plan very powerfully. No doubt the Hudson Bay Company could see in that plan a means of re-establishing its ruined trade; but, such was not the exact aim of Lord Selkirk. What he wanted was to establish a colony of his fellow-countrymen. But, to dream of throwing a colony into an Indian country, without having taken every necessary precaution and having studied the situation in all its phases, would have been an unpardonable act of imprudence, for which the North-West Company could have accused him of a crime against humanity.

Probably, it was because the North-West Company saw the great wisdom of Lord Selkirk, when he sought to purchase the valley of the Red River, that it resolved to prevent the transaction and to later on ruin the colony, and drive away from the North-West all witnesses of its own crimes.

As soon as Lord Selkirk was back in England he communicated to the agents of the Hudson Bay Company his intention of entering their corporation. The shares being quoted at only 50 per cent. the time was favorable to purchase. The Company's capital stock was divided into one hundred shares: Lord Selkirk bought forty shares, and, thereby, became the most important shareholder. This first step being taken, he explained his scheme of purchasing an immense tract of the best land along the Red River, in the North-West territory, whereon to establish a colony of his fellow-countrymen. A meeting of the shareholders of the Company was called; it took place in May, 1811. But to give them time to study the scheme the first meeting was adjourned for a few weeks. Mean

while, notice was given to all interested parties to go to the Company's office to receive all information concerning the conditions of the proposed concession. At the second meeting the project was again discussed and the measure was adopted.

Some time before the conclusion of the transaction, Lord Selkirk had been having conferences with a very important member of the North-West Company — Sir Alexander Mackenzie. He was on the point of getting the latter to buy shares in the Hudson Bay Company, but not being able to come to an understanding with him, Lord Selkirk bought, in his own name, £40,000 sterling worth of stock.

Had Sir Alexander Mackenzie been rich enough to have purchased those shares he would not have hesitated a moment, because he wanted to gain such a preponderance of power in the Hudson Bay Company as would enable him to amalgamate it with the North-West Company, and thus make the latter mistress of all the trade from the Hudson Bay to the Pacific coast. His was certainly a grand idea, but it did not harmonize with that of Lord Selkirk, whose aim was totally different.

"It is certain," writes Hon. Mr. Masson, "that that distinguished man (Mackenzie), a friend of the North-West Company, in which he had still large interests, had foreseen the realization of his dream, several years before, and mention of which is made in his account of his travels: which dream was the creation, by means of a combination of the two Companies, of a powerful organization to secure the establishment of a grand commercial highway across the continent.

"Not having enough means to purchase alone a sufficient number of shares to control the Hudson Bay Com-

pany, he had interviewed Lord Selkirk in the hope of bringing that Company to terms with his former co-partners. He had hoped that a considerable part of the money would be supplied by the North-West Company in the name of which he would complete the transaction.

"This view of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's actions is sustained by one of his letters to Mr. Roderick Mackenzie, dated London, 13th April, 1812."

No person attempts to give any other interpretation of the conferences between Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Lord Selkirk. This one is enough, especially as there would have been nothing wrong in the realization of the meditated scheme — on the contrary, it displays the grand and ever useful ideas of that remarkable man. Sir Alexander Mackenzie's scheme was realized seventy-two years later by the Canadian Government, under the inspiration of the country's statesmen, and with the co-operation of the powerful Canadian Pacific Company. It was a project worthy of a man of genius, and although Sir Alexander Mackenzie had in view, at the same time, the greatness and wealth of the North-West Company, still history cannot but praise his efforts to have sought the success of such a magnificent plan. Here, also, we have an evidence that Lord Selkirk, in his negotiations with the Hudson Bay Company, was not actuated by a desire to increase his own fortune through the fur trade, for never could a better opportunity have come to him. If he declined to take advantage of that chance, it was because his fixed determination was to found a colony of his fellow-countrymen at the Red River, and not to go into the Western fur trading, as he has been accused of wishing to do. He pursued his colonizing scheme, despite all the obstacles to it that, under pretence of protecting its own rights, the North-West Company raised.

Through a verbal agreement with Mr. McGillivray, the shares acquired by Sir Alexander Mackenzie were to belong to the North-West Company, and, if McGillivray had been present, he certainly would have bought all the shares that later on fell into the hands of Lord Selkirk.

This first stroke having failed, six property-holders of the Hudson Bay Company, of whom two were recognized agents of the North-West Company in London, signed a protest, which they presented to the meeting, against the cession of lands to Lord Selkirk. On reading that document it was easy to see that the North-West Company was pulling the wires. The opposants lacked skill "in hiding their hands." They first alleged that, by the conditions of the cession, Lord Selkirk was not sufficiently bound to establish a colony; then, a few lines lower down, they explain their opposition on the ground that, since all time, the establishment of colonies had been injurious to the fur trade. In truth, this second reason was the only one that actuated the North-West Company. What that body wanted was beaver, and to obtain that commodity it was ready to sacrifice all the blessings of civilization.

The protest did not prevent the transaction being consummated. Later on, the North-West Company frequently cited that document in attempts to prove that Lord Selkirk had sacrificed the interests of the Hudson Bay Company. It is well known how the North-West Company, itself, had protected the Hudson Bay Company when it obliged the latter to abandon all the hunting grounds and drove it back to the seashore.

So far the opposition to Lord Selkirk only seemed to come from the Hudson Bay Company; but, when the Partners of the North-West Company saw that the Scottish Lord persisted in the carrying out of his plans, they

dropped the mask and, before even the departure of a colonist for the Red River, declared themselves openly against him. In a pamphlet, published in London, in 1817, by the North-West Company, we read the following remarks:—

"The North-West Company frankly explained to the Hudson Bay Company and to the Government the motives of its opposition to Lord Selkirk's attempt, and of the firm resolution that it had made to defend its *rights* and its *possessions;* it added that, in spite of the displeasure it felt at the measures adopted by the Hudson Bay Company, *it would always be ready to lessen the misfortune of its unfortunate fellow-countrymen destined, as colonists, to fall victims to Lord Selkirk's visionary projects.* It reiterated its express declaration of never recognizing the exclusive commercial rights of the Hudson Bay Company. (1)

We remember that, in 1670, at the time of its organization, the Hudson Bay Company had obtained, from Charles II., King of England, a charter conferring on it the exclusive right of fur-trading in all the extnent of territory whose waters flowed into the Hudson Bay. For a century and a half no person ever contested the validity of that charter.

The North-West Company did not possess any privileges from the Government, but as it had, for twenty-six years (from 1784 to 1810), acted as queen and mistress over all the Western trade, it claimed that it had just as much rights as had the Hudson Bay Company, with its charter. Before concluding the transaction, Lord Selkirk

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(1) Mr. Miles MacDonell, in a letter to Lord Selkirk, says: —"Mr. Alexander Mackenzie, in London, bound himself in a most formal and most decisive manner, to oppose, by every means in his own power, the establishment of the colony." (Report of Canadian Archives, volume for the year 1886, Ottawa.)

had submitted the charter of the Company to the most learned legal authorities in London, and five of them told him that the grant of the land expressed in the charter was valid, and that the concession included all the countries the waters of which flowed into the Hudson Bay.

It was upon the advice of those legal lights that Lord Selkirk closed the bargain. On the other hand, the North-West Company consulted several lawyers, from whom it received answers favorable to its claims. On these opinions it based itself when it informed its rival that it cared nothing for its old musty charter and that, for the future, it would pay no attention to it. (1)

(1) The legality of the charter granted to the Hudson Bay Company was recognized by the Canadian Government, in 1870, at the time of the acquisition of the North-West Territories.

CHAPTER IX.

SUMMARY.

Lord Selkirk's announcement in Scotland of his intention to establish a colony at the Red River.— First steps taken. — Miles MacDonell is placed in charge of the emigrants and is made Governor of the colony.— That gentleman's honorable character.— Difficulties and hardships common to all colonies at their origin.— Departure of the first Scotch settlers for the Red River.— Slowness of the voyage.— Wintering at the Hudson Bay.—Arrival of the colonists at the Red River in August, 1812.— Hostile manifestations on the part of the Half-Breeds.— The colonists go to spend the winter at Pembina. — A word about the Half-Breeds.

To make the country, in which he wished to establish a colony known, Lord Selkirk published a prospectus which he specially addressed to the Scotch farmers, and in which he laid down the conditions that the emigrants would have to fulfil.

The North-West Company attacked that document and accused Lord Selkirk of seeking to deceive his fellow-countrymen in an abominable manner. Yet, that prospectus contained nothing more than may be found in all the pamphlets on Manitoba to-day. He speaks of it as a land of astonishing fertility and easy of cultivation, with a very healthy climate and a temperature about the same as in Canada.

While he unfolds the advantages of the new country, at the same time he does not forget to draw attention to the inconveniences to be found there — such as that of isolation and remoteness from all civilized countries. But he adds that, awaiting the day of easy communication with

Canada, the natural resources of the country would suffice for all the needs of its new inhabitants.

Was Lord Selkirk, as certain historians pretend, imprudent or over-confidant in this regard? Did he forget that, while very abundant as a rule, both game and fish as well as crops might fail, and that the colonists, being unable to obtain aid from other countries, might be exposed to die of hunger? Not at all. Lord Selkirk had not overlooked such possibilities. But he knew that calculating upon all manner of possible inconveniences, that is to say, regarding the future with pessimistic eye, means simply drawing back from all useful undertakings. He knew that famine and war may lay waste the most favored regions, and, that while taking into due consideration the difficulties that are to be found everywhere, it is also necessary to count a great deal upon the ordinary help that Divine Providence supplies.

We will see later on that it was exactly the same people who so loudly censured Lord Selkirk, who accused Miles MacDonell of criminal behavior, when, in 1814, he made sure of a certain quantity of meat deemed necessary for the sustenance of the colonists.

Lord Selkirk's emigration agents, during the winter of 1811, had recruited about twenty Scotch and Irish families, and had brought them together at Stornoway, in the Island of Lewis. It was from there that they started, in June, 1811, on a Hudson Bay Company's vessel. A Scotch Catholic, named Miles MacDonell, was placed in charge by Lord Selkirk, and instructed to follow the emigrants to the Red River, and to take command of the infant colony, of which he was named Governor.

It may be well to now make the acquaintance of this important personage, about whom much will be related in connection with the unfortunate events of 1814.

In its writings the North-West Company sought to represent him as being violent, dishonest, quarrelsome and devoid of judgment. He has even been accused, by its members, of having been the primary cause of the ruin of the colony. That the reader may be in a position to estimate those accusations at their proper value, we will reproduce a letter, addressed by this same man, to Mgr. Plessis, asking him for missionaries for the Red River. The tone of that letter does not indicate a man of violent and evil intentions.

After having laid before the Bishop of Quebec the advantages which the country offered for colonization, he adds:—

"You are aware, Monseigneur, that without religion there is no stability for governments, states or kingdoms. Religion should be the corner-stone. The principal motive for which I desired to co-operate with all my strength in Lord Selkirk's praiseworthy enterprise, was to work in having the Catholic Faith dominant in that settlement, and the hope that I might be an instrument of Providence in helping to spread that blessing. Our spiritual needs grow with our numbers; we have many poor Scotch and Irish Cotholics apart from about a hundred Canadians, wandering about the colony with their families. All are in a most deplorable condition and in most pressing need of spiritual aid; it is an abundant religious harvest that is offered. There is also an amount of success to be expected among the infidels, whose language is almost the same as that of the Algonquins in Canada. I learned that you were to send two missionaries this summer to Rainy Lake. I would be happy to offer one of those gentlemen a passage in my canoe to the Red River, which is only six days travel from Rainy Lake. I have no doubt that

Your Grace's zeal will make every effort to extend to our rising colony the benefits of religion." (*Letter conserved in the archives of the Archbishopric of Quebec.*)

Such is the Christian and man of faith, whom the North-West Company sought to picture as a brigand. The tone of his letter indicates anything else.

A colony is not established without a hoste of tribulations, anxieties and annoyances. In like manner, they who consent to emigrate and to lay the basis of a new nationhood in distant lands must always expect to meet with hardships, unpleasantness and deceptions. From the days of the Trojans, seeking out a new country, down to those of the bands of European emigrants who came to pitch their tents in the deserts of the New World, all, without exception, have had much to suffer. If Lord Selkirk's colonists had a large share of such sufferings to endure, there is nothing astonishing in it. Their fate was the same as that of a multitude of others who landed on the shores of North America, with the intention of settling there. Countless examples might be cited.

When, towards the beginning of the 17th century, the Puritans from England, flying from the persecution to which they were subjected, came to settle in Massachusetts, they had to undergo hardships as great, if not greater, than those suffered by the Red River colonists — since the half of them died in consequence. Here is how Toqueville, a French writer, describes them:—

" The autumn was drawing to a close when they left the European shores ..... when they reached the end of their voyage they found no friends to receive them, no houses to give them shelter. It was mid-winter, and all who are acquainted with North America know of the severity of the winters and the furious storms that sweep

the coasts. In that season of the year, it is difficult to travel well-known places, and naturally more so shores that are unknown. Around them spread nothing but an ugly and desolate desert, peopled with wild animals and wild men, the ferocity and numbers of which they ignored. Everything bore an appearance of barbarism. Before the return of the spring the half of the emigrants had died on account of their sufferings."

The fate of the first colonists in Acadia is also well known.

We have quoted this passage in order to show that the condition of Lord Selkirk's colonists was no worse than that of any pioneer colonists landed in America. No matter in what latitude they were, when they had not to struggle with the climate they were obliged to wrestle with disease. The North-West Company, in order to blacken the praiseworthy undertaking of Lord Selkirk, took great pains to circulate most fearful stories of the miseries endured by the families that emigrated to the Red River in 1812.

The vessel carrying the colonists did not reach the Hudson Bay until the close of September. It was then too late to think of starting them for the Red River. Through an unfortunate misunderstanding the Hudson Bay officials had made no preparations to receive them. They believed, no doubt, that the emigrants would arrive in time to proceed on their journey, or else that they would not come at all. As soon as they had landed, a large number of them were sent up the Nelson river to spend the winter in round shanties, like those built, to-day, by the lumber firms in the woods; the remainder of them stayed at Fort York.

The winter seemed very long to the emigrants, not only

on account of the rigor of the climate and the privations they had to undergo in their miserable huts, but, especially because of the idleness in which they had to spend the days — there was really no work to be done in that temporary place. Yet the historians, Ross and Gunn, make mention of no deaths among them.

Gunn says that there were quarrels between the emigrants and officials of the Company, regarding the food served them. They found fault with both the quality and the quantity. He says that the eatables given the colonists were very inferior, consisting principally of pemican and mud-pouts, and no salt was to be had.

One thing certain, in the spring-time, all of them were able to start on foot upon a journey of seven hundred and fifty miles across a country that would tax the strength of robust men, and that they all reached the Red River safe and sound. (See Ross, " Red River Settlement," page 23.)

The start from the Bay did not take place till June, for they had to await the breaking-up of the ice, which, in those latitudes only takes place on the lakes and rivers about the commencement of the summer.

The march was a slow one, and the month of August was drawing to its close when they reached the centre selected for the settlement at Fort Douglas.

If their journey had been long and wearisome, their arrival, thanks to the rumors circulated in advance by the North-West Company, was far from encouraging.

Alexander Ross, the historian, says:—"And but a few hours had passed over their heads in the land of their adoption, when an array or armed men, of grotesque mould, painted, disfigured, and dressed in the savage

costume of the country, warned them that they were unwelcome visitors. These crested warriors, for the most part, were employees of the North-West Company."

Thus, the first demonstration that the colonists witnessed was hostile.

The first care of the Governor of the colony was to prepare lodgings, and to secure provisions for the families. The carpenters set to work to construct little round cabins of logs, like those in which the previous winter had been passed. For years, that class of building remained in use on the Red River.

In 1862, fifty years after the arrival of the first colonists, the half of the inhabited houses were just as shabby. Often there were neither ceilings nor floors; and as for light, they had only a scraped skin fixed in a frame of wood, like a window frame, and this alone gave light to the twenty-by-twenty foot hut. And without going so far back, the Mennoties of Manitoba had no better lodging places than had the first inhabitants of the country.

Once those lodgings were completed, they had to find provisions, and that was no easy matter. In this regard, some writers have found it strange that in a country where there were tens of thousands of buffalos the food should be so scarce. Their astonishment is simply due to their want of knowledge of the country.

While the prairies along the Red River, in 1812, were dotted with buffalos, we must not imagine that those wild animals allowed themselves to be felled with mallets as if they were domestic cattle. To bring them down, numerous as they were, it required a cunning in the hunter that only the Half-Breeds and Indians possessed. Few strangers would risk the danger of chasing after the buffalo. The poor emigrants, fresh from the mountains of

Scotland, were no more prepared for that class of hunting than would be children. Moreover, they would have required horses, trained for the purpose, and they had none; and, again, the buffaloes ranged one hundred miles to the south of them on the plains of Dakota.

Governor MacDonell soon found that it would be impossible to find a sufficient quantity of food for those families, so he resolved to send a number of them to spend the winter at Pembina, some seventy miles south of Fort Douglas. A great many of the Company's servants, both Canadians and Half-Breeds, went there every autumn to be in the neighborhood of the buffaloes. The place where they wintered was called Grand Camp. To reach that place with their wives and children, the Scotchmen applied to the Half-Breeds, whom they took to be Indians, and concluded a bargain, whereby the latter agreed to carry the children on horseback to Pembina, while all who could walk were to get there on foot. In return, they were to receive certain articles that the Scotch had brought with them into the country. The journey was very fatiguing for the poor people, already done out with their exertions of the summer. Happily, their guides were good to them and adhered faithfully to the conditions of their agreement.

Strange to say, however, they were nearly all the same men who had gone to Fort Douglas to threaten the emigrants.

Alexander Ross, in his "Red River Settlement" (page 23), says: — "They were a mixed company of freemen, Half-Breeds, and some few Indians, and most of them had been attached, at the time to the hostile party by whom the emigrants had been ordered to leave the colony. They were then acting under the influence of the North-West

Company; but in going to Pembina, on the present occasion, they were free and acting for themselves. And here it is worthy of remark, that the insolence and overbearing tone of those men, when under the eye of their masters, were not more conspicuous than their kind, affable, and friendly department towards the emigrants, when following the impulse of their own free-will. To the Scotch emigrants, who were completely in their power, they were everything they could wish; mild, generous, and trustworthy.

"The Scotch were convinced that, when not influenced or roused by bad counsel, or urged on to mischief by designing men, the natural disposition of the Half-Breeds is humble, benevolent, kind, and sociable."

Such is also our firm belief. We, who have intimately known the Half-Breeds, are aware of their good disposition. Ever ready to do a service, they were kind and polite for all. All the missionaries who have lived with them pay them the same tribute.

If they had shown hostility towards the new emigrants, it was because the agents of the North-West Company had pushed them to it.

CHAPTER X.

SUMMARY.

Winter life in the North-West.— Why Pembina was selected as a place of habitation.— The whitemen readily become accustomed to that kind of life.— Description of the hunt.— Mutual understanding between the Scotchmen and the Half-Breeds. — Return of the colonists to the Red River. — Second batch of emigrants.— Severe sufferings from sickness during the voyage.— Their arrival at the Red River.— Second winter spent at Pembina.— Great sufferings.— The means adopted by the Government to procure food for the colonists.— A Proclamation.— Seizure of provisions.— The North-West Company determines to ruin the colony.

At Pembina, the people passed their winter under tents, or in huts, or wigwams, like the Indians. On account of the splendid pasturage to the west and the south of that river, the herds of buffaloes roamed about there in great-numbers, so that food was rarely scarce with the emigrants. During many years, after the settlement of the colony and even after the arrival of the missionaries in the country, the Half-Breeds and the Canadians, who had left the service of the Companies, continued to go to Pembina to spend the winters. Monseigneur Provencher was obliged to go spend the winter of 1819-20 there, because he could not procure provisions and food at St. Boniface.

The Scotch emigrants lived on good terms with all the inhabitants of that camp — Canadians, Half-Breeds and Indians, all were kind towards them. So the winter was spent by them agreeably enough. Moreover, the kind of life that the hunters and their families led was not with-

out its charm. Once our Canadian *voyageurs* had adopted that mode of life, they preferred it to an existence inside the bounds of civilization.

Those, who came later on to settle in the North-West, wonder why the Half-Breeds preferred the life of a hunter to that of a farmer, and despised agriculture. Yet, there was nothing astonishing in that, and, if we only reflect a little upon it, we will find that it was quite natural.

Fifty years ago, the prairies were covered with herds of buffaloes. A few weeks spent in hunting those animals sufficed to supply an abundance of meat. This meat, added to the fish caught in the lakes and rivers, kept their families during the greater part of the year.

In the spring-time, when the snow had disappeared and the grass began to carpet the plains, bands of hunters, armed with guns and mounted on nimble ponies, set out in troops, as if they were certain of never being in need again of anything.

As soon as they came upon the buffalo tracks, they pitched their tents, settled their wives and children in them, and then, under the command of a chief — elected for the season — gave chase to the great game of the prairies.

A race, or run, lasted generally about twenty minutes; during that space of time, a good horseman could ordinarily felle ten head of buffalo, which were at once cut up on the plain. Once that work over, the men spent their time smoking and chatting, stretched out on the prairie-grass, or betting upon the runs. The season thus went past, and towards the end of the summer, the caravan returned to the big camp, with cart-loads of meat for the winter. During the autumn they fished whitefish, which abounds in Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba. Sometimes

the hunt was not up to expectations, but even the farmer cannot always expect an abundant harvest: years of scarcity alternate with years of plenty.

Having so much facility for procuring food, the Half-Breeds were naturally indifferent to agriculture.

So cordial were the relations between the Scotch people and the hunters, during the winter, that, when the spring came, it was with regret that they separated. (1)

The colonists returned to Fort Douglas to commence there their farm work. They enjoyed peace, but suffered from hunger. During several months, they had only fish to eat, to which they added a kind of vegetable known as prairie turnip.

During the summer of 1813, they worked to put their fields under cultivation, in the hope of harvesting enough to supply their wants during the following winter. The grain sown gave abundant crops. One colonist gathered twelve and a half bushels of potatoes from one gallon of seed. Despite the privations they had to undergo, the poor people were full of hope in the future. The kind treatment they had received from the natives, at the Pembina camp, had dispelled all the fears they experienced on coming to the Red River, and everything was apparently going well, when new clouds appeared on the horizon.

While the first emigrants, at the Red River, were struggling against the ceaselessly recurring obstacles in their way, Lord Selkirk and his agents were actively occupied in Scotland with the preparing of a second detachment for the autumn of 1813. Circumstances were very favorable for the success of that project.

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(1) "They parted with regret, when in May, the Scotch returned to the colony. (Ross, Red River Settlement, page 23.)

* * *

We have seen that during the two years, 1812 and 1813, the Scotch colonists were obliged to take refuge at Pembina, each autumn, in order to avoid starvation during the winter season. This was not a necessity peculiar to these strangers, even the people of the country, after having spent the summer around the Fort, were careful to get away from the famine there, when the winter approached. In the valley of the Red River, as is well known by all who are acquainted with the North-West, there was no game to be had, save that which was brought from the prairie.

Had the historians of that country been aware of this, they would have judged events differently from what they have done, and would not have found fault, as they did, with the course taken by Mr. Miles MacDonell, the Governor of the colony. (1)

During the year 1814, a third contingent of Scotch emigrants reached the Red River; they brought the number of the colonists up to two hundred. A fourth batch had arrived at the Hudson Bay, to there spend the winter, and others were expected during the following summer.

Governor Miles MacDonell felt all the responsibility of his position and the obligation that rested upon him of providing the hunger-exposed families with food. Seeing that the only way to procure provisions was to oblige the hunters from the Assiniboia district to come and sell the produce of their chase at Fort Douglas, he published a proclamation in which, after setting forth Lord Selkirk's claims on the Red River country, claims arising from

(1) See "La Vie de Mgr. Provencher," by the present author, Abbé Dugas (page 90.)

concessions made to him by the Hudson Bay Company, by means of a charter obtained from the King of England, in 1670, he regulated as follows:—

"Whereas the Right Honorable Thomas, Earl of Selkirk, is anxious to provide for the families at present forming settlements on his lands at Red River, with those on the way to it, passing the winter at York and Churchill Forts, in Hudson Bay, as also those who are expected to arrive next autumn, renders it a neccessary and indispensable part of my duty to provide for their support. In the yet uncultivated state of the country, the ordinary resources derived from the buffalo and other wild animals hunted within the territory, are not deemed more than adequate for the requisite supply. Whereas, it is hereby ordered that no person trading furs or provisions within the territory for the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company, or the North-West Company, or any individual, or unconnected traders or persons whatever, shall take any provisions, either of flesh, fish, grain, or vegetables, procured or raised within the said territory, by water or land carriage, for one twelve-month from the date hereof; save and except what may be judged necessary for the trading parties at this present time, within the territory, to carry them to their respective destinations; and who may, on due application to me, obtain a license for the same.

"The provisions, procured and raised as above, shall be taken for the use of the colony; and that no loss may accrue to the parties concerned, they will be paid for by British bills at the customary rates. And be it hereby further known, that whosoever shall be detected in attempting to convey out, or shall aid and assist in carrying out, any provisions prohibited as above, either by water or land, shall be taken into custody, and prosecuted, as the

laws in such cases direct, and the provisions so taken, as well as any goods and chattels, of whatsoever nature, which may be taken along with them, and also the craft, carriages, and cattle, instrumental in conveying away the same to any part but to the settlement on Red River, shall be forfeited.

"Given under my hand, at Fort Daer (Pembina), the 8th day of January, 1814.

(Signed,) "MILES MCDONELL, *Governor.*

"By order of the Governor.

(Signed,) "JOHN SPENCER, *Secretary.*" (1)

The aim of this proclamation was not merely to attack the North-West Company, nor to injure its trade, since it refers equally to the Hudson Bay Companye, which was in the same position as its rival, having the same number of trading posts to supply with provisions.

As a result of this formal order, all the Hudson Bay Company traders, and all the unconnected traders, brought whatever provisions they could do without to Mr. Miles Macdonell, and after being paid, obtained leave to carry the balance elsewhere.

As agents of the North-West Company, at the Red River, represented to the Governor, that their trade would suffer, in other parts of the country, if deprived of those

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(1) The above proclamation is merely summarized by Abbé Dugas, in his work. The translater has taken the liberty of transcribing the entire document, *verbatim*, as he finds it in Alexander Ross' "Red River Settlement, pages 25 to 27.

provisions, an arrangement was made whereby the North-West Company, for the time being, kept all the provisions it desired, but on the condition to supply a quantity equal to that which it exported from the country, should the colonists, later on, be in need. Thus the Company could not claim that it was unnecessarily deprived of its goods. Nothing could seem more reasonable than that arrangement; yet, when it was submitted to the head agents, these latter refused to sanction it, and, further, they instructed their traders to pay no attention to the proclamation, and to export from the Red River all the provisions that they had in their possession, as well all those they might buy from the Indians.

The North-West Company was well pleased with a chance to declare open war. For a year back they had been sending letters to Lord Selkirk, in Scotland, to warn him that the Indians threatened to destroy his colony and to chase his settlers away from the place. This was a cute way of hiding its own game, and having the Indians later on blamed for the odious conduct of which it was to soon become guilty. Lord Selkirk had less distrust of the Indians than he had of the members and agents of the Company. Still he deemed it prudent to send arms to Fort Douglas, in order to place the Governor in a position to protect his colonists, should the natives, in reality, manifest any evil intentions in their regard. Further on, we will give the testimony of an Indian chief, as declared before the Courts, that Partners of the Company had made him the offer of rich rewards, if he would agree to make war on the colonists. For the moment, we will return to the events that followed the issuing of the proclamation.

To turn the individual or unconnected traders against Governor Macdonell and the colonists, the agents of the

North-West Company told them that the proclamation was an act of tyranny perpetrated on the natives, who were the rightful owners of the country; that their liberty was done for, if they submitted to such an order, and that soon the whitemen would drive them away from the Red River. It did not require any more to irritate them and cause them to detest the colonists.

After a few months Governor MacDonell, seeing that not only the North-West Company, but also the Half-Breeds and the unconnected traders were exporting provisions from the district, and that soon he would be unable to get supplies, resolved to take vigorous action to recover a part of what had been carried off to neighboring forts. (1)

At about one hundred and fifty miles from Fort Douglas, on the Souris river, the North-West Company had a Fort in which a large amount of dry meat was stored; the provisions taken from the Red River were carried there. The Governor ordered one Spencer to go, with soldiers, and take possession of that Fort, and to bring back to the settlement all the provisions to be found therein. The order was executed, but the exploit was like a lit match on a powder fuse — war was declared.

The North-West Company could find no terms sufficiently strong and offensive to characterize the Governor and his act; they compared him to a brigand worthy of

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(1) The most favorable witnesses that the North-West Company had before the Courts, were obliged to admit that the Company's employees went through the camps of the unconnected traders to buy all the produce of their hunt, so as to deprive the colonists of it, knowing that the latter, in case of need, could not then get any provisions for love or money. The Company wanted to exterminate the colonists by famine.

condign punishment. They forgot that ten years earlier, in the Northern Forts, they had, with armed hand, stolen — not provisions needed to preserve life, but — the furs that belonged to the Hudson Bay Company, and that, without any scruple, they had repeated their brute force attacks time and again. But the roles were now changed.

The news of the taking of Fort La Souris was at once carried by special runners to all the North-West Forts, and all were advised to look to the means of being avenged. It is easy to imagine the effect of such news upon the already over-excited minds. Still the rest of the summer and a part of the winter of 1814 were spent quietly enough. But all that while plans were being laid for the destruction of the colony.

The general meeting of the Partners of the North-West Company was held every summer, at Fort William, on the shore of Lake Superior. It was there that all matters of importance to the Company were discussed and then it was that each one was assigned to his special duty for the coming year.

At the mouth of the Assiniboine river the Company had an unimportant fort called Fort Gibraltar. Never had it been considered necessary to place a factor or Partner there; an ordinary clerk, with a few servants, sufficed for the business of the place. It had, however, the advantage of being in the neighborhood of Fort Douglas, and from it a Partner could keep an eye upon all Governor MacDonell's movements.

In the month of July, 1814, Duncan Cameron was appointed to that post, and one of his friends, Alex. Macdonell, was sent to Fort Qu'Appelle. They both had the same mission,— to work together to ruin the colony.

A few days after his departure from Fort William, Alexander Macdonell wrote the following letter to one of his friends, in Montreal:—

5th August, 1814.

"My Dear Friend,

. . . . . .

. . . . "You see, me and our mutual friend Cameron, about to commence open warfare with the Red River enemy. If some persons are to be believed, there is a lot expected of us, may be too much. One thing certain, we will do our best to defend what we *consider* as our rights in the interior. There will doubtless be some serious work; there are those who will only be satisfied with the complete ruin of the colony, no matter by what means, which is much to be desired, if it can be effected. So I am working for it with all my heart."

ALEX. MACDONELL."

Cameron and his comrade arrived at Fort Gibraltar towards the end of August. It would be hard to say why they called that fort "Gibraltar," for it in no way suggested the famous fortress that frowns down upon the straits leading into the Mediterranean . Macdonell continued on to Fort Qp'Appelle where he was to spend the winter, stirring up the Indians whom he was to bring down to the Red River in the month of May. We will soon see that he displayed a zeal in the accomplishment of his task, that fully satisfied the members of the Company.

Duncan Cameron spent the autumn, the winter and

part of the spring at Fort Gibraltar. The Company depended upon him, principally, to paralyse the advancement of the colony before coming to extreme measures with it — should trickery fail. In the following chapter, we will see that Cameron had been well chosen for such a role; since, by the month of June, 1815, thanks to his criminal proceedings, all traces of the colony had vanished.

CHAPTER XI.

SUMMARY.

Bungling policy of the North-West Company.— Duncan Cameron at Fort Gibraltar, on the Red River.— His scheming to discourage the settlers.— He advises them to leave the Red River and to steal all they could lay hands on at Fort Douglas.— He seizes the arms, which the settlers had to defend themselves against the Indians.— He takes Governor MadDonell prisoner.— He drives away the settlers who will not go down to Canada with him.— The Company's servants burn down the houses of the settlers.

If the North-West Company, instead of setting itself to the task of destroying in its cradle Lord Selkirk's (1) civilizing undertaking, had continued its business and allowed the colony to peacefully grow on the banks of the Red River, its traders, for several years more, would have realized immense benefits.

Being mistress of the highways communicating between the Red River and Canada, the Company controlled all that part of the country washed by the great lakes and the rivers that connect them.

In the North, its influence was felt by the Indian tribes, as far as the Arctic Ocean; in the West, it had crossed the Rocky Mountains, and its depots established on the Pacific coast, assured it the trade of all those regions. But, with the spirit which animated it, a continuation of

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(1) The trading companies never helped in civilizing any country; on the contrary, they were always an obstacle in the way of true civilization.

of its existence would have been a misfortune for the people of that country. Divine Providence had merciful designs in their regard and He did not permit the Company to perceive the policy that would have been to its advantage. This is an illustration of the saying that God uses even the follies of men to attain His own ends.

The North-West Company was interested in keeping the Red River country in a state of *barbarism,* and this was exactly the reason of its adopting a course that opened an avenue for real civilization.

Before coming down to extreme measures, Duncan Cameron tried intrigue. To discocurage the settlers and induce them to leave the Red River district and go to Canada was a less odious proceeding than the employment of brute force.

Being a Scotchman by birth, and speaking the Gaelic, it was easy for him to gain their confidence. He paid them a visit, inquired about their condition, because acquainted with the most influential among them, and invited them to come and see him at Fort Gibraltar.

Affected by the interest he manifested in them, and never suspecting any ulterior motive, the Scotch Highlanders gave him by degrees their confidence, and some of them looked upon him as a sincere friend of their cause.

When he had once gained their confidence he began to sow seeds of discontent among them, and to disgust them, with their work he painted the future in the blackest dye. Amongst other things, he told them that he had it from a reliable source, that bands of Indians were getting ready to pounce on the colony in the springtime, and that their only escape from the threatening danger was to place themselves under the protection of the North-West Company.

It did not need any more to create general terror among the poor people. And several of them thought that it would be ill-advised to reject Cameron's generous offer.

But that promised protection was not to be given them at the Red River. The Company would only take pity on them on condition that they would go to Canada at once, where they were promised lands and provisions for one year. We find the proof of these low designs in the evidence given, on oath, by the settlers, before a Justice of the Peace in 1815. (1)

It was easy for Cameron to play the prophet and to announce the coming of the Indians the following spring. It was for the purpose of gathering them together that MacDonell, his associate in this inglorious work, had gone to Fort Qu'Appelle; and this he let slip in that letter, to his friend in Montreal, in which he said: "There will doubtless be some serious work . . . . .perhaps the complete ruin of the colony."

Cameron not only promised to send them to Canada at his own expense, but he also offered several of them large sums if they would second him in his plot. Among the emigrants were several carpenters and builders, who were employed to erect houses and construct other edifices, and who used tools supplied to them by Lord Selkirk. Cameron tried to have them leave the Red River colony and bring with them all that they possessed. He promised to buy all those articles, tools, arms, and the like, from them.

Such conduct would seem incredible had we not authentic evidence which only too exactly confirms all the details.

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(1) These documents are to be found in the Appendix.

On the 10th February, 1815, from Fort Gibraltar, where he had spent the winter, Cameron wrote two letters, from which we will take extracts. They were addressed to a couple of colonists, who had long resisted his solicitations, but who appeared to waver and to agree to go to Canada. The letters were carried to them by Pangman, a Bostonian in the service of the North-West Company.

"To Messrs. DONALD LIVINGSTON
and HECTOR MCEACHERN.

"Gentlemen,

"Your letter of the 28th January, that you sent me by Jordan, was placed in my hands. I am delighted to see that some of you are beginning to open your eyes regarding the situation in which you find yourselves in this barbaric country, and that you at last recognize the folly that you have committed in obeying the orders of a brigand, and if I may say it, a highway robber.

"Through pity for the deplorable position in which you are placed, for I consider you as being in the most miserable of prisons here, I accept your offers and I feel happy to be able to draw as many of my fellow-countrymen as possible out of slavery. I know that Lord Selkirk will never send any of you back to this country.

"You have already been deceived and he would not be ashamed to deceive you again, for making dupes of people is a most profitable business for him and MacDonell. I will feel it an honor to be your liberator; I do not ask you a cent or your passage, nor for the provisions that you may need on the way. You are going to a good

country, where you can find an honest livelihood for your families.

"We will bind ourselves to find farms for those who wish to have them, and we will not place any of you on the highway as beggars before you are in a position to make your living. In making you these promises, I have no other interest than that which a humane sentiment suggests.

. . . . . .

"Do not fear that Captain MacDonell will ever know any of my secrets, but be careful that Mrs McLean does not learn any of yours, for she would sell even her own brother." (1)

"Your sincere friend,

"(Signed,) D. CAMERON."

A few weeks later, at the beginning of March, Cameron wrote again to the same persons, in the following terms:

"Your letter of the 6th March has been handed me by honest John Sommerville. I rejoice to see that you are always of the same mind, especially that I will thus have an opportunity of delivering a greater number of people from slavery, and not only that, but of saving your lives, for every day your lives are in danger from the Sauteux and Sioux Indians.

. . . . . .

"You need expect no justice in this country. However, before going, take all you can get hold of from the

(1) Alex. McLean was a settler devoted to Lord Selkirk's cause and contented with his lot, at the Red River.

storehouse of the colony; *I will buy the articles* that may be of use here, and I will pay you for them in Canada. My door will be always open to all who may wish to come to the Fort, and we will strive to have you live, as best we can, from now till spring-time."

"I am your sincere friend,

"(Signed), D. CAMERON."

Among the emigrants who arrived the previous autumn (1814), was one George Campbell, who, on account of the somewhat better position he had held in Scotland before leaving, seemed to exercise a certain influence among his fellow-countrymen at the Red River. As Cameron noticed this, he spared neither promises nor money to win him over. He had him come with his family to Fort Gibraltar, where he was fed, at the Company's expense, until the spring. Besides, he was promised, over and above the cost of his fare to Canada, the sum of one hundred pounds sterling, payable at Fort William, all, on the condition that he would exercise all his best influence in having his fellow-countrymen abandon the colony.

To show that he succeeded only too well in his evil design, we will here reproduce the evidence given, in November, 1815, by a Scotch settler, in presence of Judge J. N. Mondelet, at Montreal. This evidence is an affidavit.

EVIDENCE OF MICHAEL McDONELL,

28th November, 1815,
Montreal.

"Michael McDonell, late of the Red River, in the Hudson Bay Company's territories, now of the City of Montreal, in the Province of Lower Canada, swears that he knows the person called George Campbell, one of the colonists who emigrated from Scotland to settle at the Red River colony; that the said George Campbell reached the said colony in the year of Our Lord 1814; having arrived at one of the Hudson Bay Company's trading posts, on the seashore, during the summer of 1813, and having remained there until the following spring.

"That during the winter of 1815, the said George Campbell abandoned the said colony and went to the North-West Company's trading post, in the neighborhood of the colony. That when the said George Campbell abandoned the colony, he took with him a portion of the inhabitants of the said colony, who left with him, and that he, and the said portion of the in habitants stole, and carried away, like felons, nine fieldpieces that had been supplied for the defense of the colony and that were kept in a building belonging to Lord Selkirk; that they took them to the North-West Company's post, called Fort Gibraltar, where they were received by Duncan Cameron, one of the members of the North-West Company, who retains them.

"That the said Campbell, in speaking to the deponant, declared to him that he had taken those cannons to satisfy Duncan Cameron's wish and that he did not fear the consequences, as he had, to justify his course, a written order from the said Duncan Cameron.

. . . . . .

"(Signed,) MICHAEL MCDONELL.

"Sworn at Montreal,

the 28th nov. 1815, before me

(Signed,) J. N. MONDELET, J. P."

In the beginning of April, 1815, Campbell had already succeeded in bringing some sixty, out of the total two hundred settlers at the Red River, to Fort Gibraltar.

The others persisted in remaining on their farms and flatly declined all offers made by Cameron and Campbell. To strengthen in their purpose they had Alexander McLean. He was a man entirely devoted to their real interests, despite that Cameron had promised him £400 sterling, if he would follow Campbell's example.

On the 13th April, 1815, while Governor Miles McDonell was absent from the colony's Fort, Cameron sent a party of armed men to take possession of the cannons and arms that were there. He had given them the following written order:

"Monday, 3th April, 1815,

"To Mr ARCHIBALD MCDONELL,

Guardian of the Fort.

"I have authorized the settlers to take possession of your fieldpieces, but not for the purpose of using them in a hostile manner, but only to prevent a wrong use being made of them. I hope that you will not be blind enough to your own interests to make any useless resistence, especially as no body wants to do any harm either to you or to your people."

"(signed): D. CAMERON,
"*Captain of the corps of voyageurs.*"

That order was handed to George Campbell, the most active of those who had deserted the colony.

Every Sunday the settlers met at Fort Douglas (the Fort of the Settlement) to Bible reading, which took the place of a sermon. Each Monday, they returned there to get their week's provisions. After service on a Sunday Campbell read to the settlers the order received from Cameron and informed them that on the following day it would be put into execution. Despite the warning and notice, Archibald McDonell, the commander of the Fort, believing that the Company would never go to such an extreme, took no measures for self-protection and asked no aid from the settlers.

After the dark predictions of Cameron, who had announced the approach of a band of Indians who were bent on the destruction of the colony, it was an act of the most

infamous baseness to have deprived these settlers of the arms that had been given them to defend themselves against the Indians. But it will be soon seen that the Indians were less to be feared than were the members of the Company.

On Monday, the 9th April, while the settlers were at the store house of Fort getting their supply of food, George Campbell, followed by several Half-Breeds, in the service of the Company, (among whom were *Cuthbert Grant*, *William Shaw* and *Peter Pangman*), went to Archibald McDonell and summoned him to give up all the arms, cannons and guns, that were in the Fort. To show that they had not come merely to talk, they smashed in the store doors and took out nine field-pieces. Cameron, who had remained hidden, with an other band or armed men, then came forward to help in carrying off the booty to Fort Gibraltar.

Once Fort Douglas was deprived of arms all Cameron had to do, in order to carry out his plan, was to seize Governor McDonell and become master of the situation. The Scotch farmers, being without leaders and without protection, had nothing to do but quit their lands, and either to return to Scotland by way of the Hudson Bay, or else go down to Canada in the canoes that the North-West Company offered them free of charge.

A few weeks before Cameron seized the cannons at Fort Douglas, another member of the Company named Norman McLeod, a magistrate in the Indian territory, had issued a warrant for the arrest of Governor McDonell on an accusation of having taken possession of the Company's provisions.

Cameron and his men undertook the execution of that warrant.

At first the Governor refused to submit to arrest, as he did not recognize any authority on the part of McLeod over his person. But, seeing that deeds of violence followed threats, and to prevent the effusion of blood he finally gave himself up as a prisoner to be taken to Montreal. In reality, there was no desire to have him tried, but they wished to deprive the settlers of his protection. Cameron had promised the settlers that the moment the Governor would become a prisoner all hostility, in their regard, would cease. It was like the wolf of the fable, advising the sheep to get rid of their shepherd. No sooner had Miles MacDonell left with the canoes than Cameron dropped his mask; things were going too well for him to stop half-way.

About the middle of May, Alexander McDonell, Cameron's comrade, who had spent the winter at Fort Qu'Appelle enlisting in their service the Indians and Half-Breeds, arrived with the long-heralded bands of warriors. The Company would have liked to have had the Indians commit all the depredations that it had planned against the colony. But the natives would not lend themselves to such work, and thereby showed themselves to be more civilized than their employers. After a few weeks, ill-satisfied with their journey, they returned home; but, before going, as a gauge of their friendship they sent the "Calumet of Peace" to the settlers.

About the same period of time, in the spring of 1813, two members of the Company had offered an Indian chief, from Lake du Sable, all the goods and rum in the stores at Fort William, if he would declare war on the colony at the Red River. The following is the declaration made by that Indian chief, at Drummond Island, before Mr. J. Askin, a Justice of the Peace, of the Department of Indian Affairs:—

"Katawabetay (the chief's name), declares that in the spring of 1815, as he was at Lake du Sable, McKenzie and Morrisson told him that they would give him and his people all the goods or merchandise, as well as the rum that they had at Fort William and at Lake du Sable, if, he, Katawabetay and his warriors, would declare war against the Red River settlers; on which, he asked McKenzie and Morrisson if the request to make war on the settlers by orders from the big chiefs at Quebec and at Montreal, or by the officers in command at Drummond Island, or in fine by the Justice of the Peace, J. Askin. The answer of McKenzie and Morrisson was that the request came from the agents of the North-West Company, who desired that the settlement be destroyed because it injured them; on which Katawabetay said that neither he nor his people would acquiesce to their demand before having seen and consulted the Justice of the Peace, J. Askin; that after that, he, the Indian Chief, would be governed according to the advice that he would receive."
(Extract from the minutes kept in the Department of Indian Affairs, for Drummond Island.)

JOHN ASKIN, J. P.

Such was the infernal malice of those members of the North-West Company. They would stop at no crime, no matter how horrible, even that of having Lord Selkirk's colony massacred, in order to become masters of the entire country. And we have not yet reached the last of their infamous doings.

The time for the departure of the canoes for Fort William approached, and more than the two-thirds of the settlers had not yet consented to abandon their lands and

accept Cameron's promises. The Indians whom MacDonell brought down had declined to make any attempts against the colony. Therefore the agents of the Company were obliged to act themselves, in conjunction with the servants and Half-Breeds around Fort Gibraltar.

After several manifest threats, as Cameron saw that nothing was being done and that the settlers continued to work their farms, he determined upon having recourse to violence in order to drive them out of the country.

On the 11th June, in the morning (it was a Sunday), Seraphin Lamarre, a clerk, Cuthbert Grant William Shaw, and Peter Pangman, whose names have already figured in this history, came out of Fort Gibraltar with a quantity of guns wherewith to arm the Half-Breeds and servants of the Company who lived in the surroundings. To the number of about twenty, they went and hid in a clump of trees near the Governor's residence, and there began operations by firing on Mr. White, the surgeon, who was passing near by. As those within the house wished to reply, the attacking party's fire became livelier and fiercer; four of the beseiged were severely wounded; one of them died the next day.

Cameron remained in his Fort to oversee the attack from a distance. After a few hours he came out to meet his men and to congratulate them on the manner in which they acquitted themselves of their duty.

The settlers were, therefore, greatly in error when they imagined that hostilities would cease the moment the Governor would be delivered up a prisoner.

A few days after that cowardly attack, the hostilities were commenced afresh. The people of the colony were fired upon; several farmers, working in their fields, were made prisoners. The horses were taken to Fort Gibral-

The evidence of all this was found in the Company's books, when Lord Selkirk seized Fort William, where those archives were deposited. Here are some of the letters signed by Duncan Cameron and McDonell.

"George Campbell is a well-known man; he was a zealous partizan, who more than once exposed his life for the Company. He rendered important services in the Red River transactions; he deserves a hundred pounds and the protection of the Company."

(Signed) DUNCAN CAMERON.

In another letter he says:—

"This man joined us in February and showed himself very active and, since that time, has been very useful to us; he deserves a reward from the Company."

(Signed) DUNCAN CAMERON.

Again in another one:—

"This one, in joining us, lost three years of his wages with the Hudson Bay Company. He deserves twenty pounds."

(Signed) DUNCAN CAMERON.

Alexander McDonell gave his men like certificates, so that the Company had a goodly sum to pay out to the authors of its criminal proceedings. Still, the joy of having succeeded made the payment a matter of good-will.

After spending a few days at Fort William, the Scotch families continued their journey to Canada, where the Company had promised to settle them on good farms and to feed them for one year. As we may well imagine, they did nothing of the sort. What it wanted had been accomplished and little did it care for the fate of its victims.

Now, let us go back to the families that had refused to go down to Canada and had left from Lake Winnipeg, with the two Indian guides, for the Hudson Bay. At the mouth of the river the guides left the colonists, expressing, at the same time, the hope of seeing them return some day to the same lands from which they had been so cruelly banished.

From that point they went on, as best they could, to the other end of the lake, and stopped for a time at a trading post of the Hudson Bay Company, called *Jack River House.*

In the course of the month of July, a man, named Collin Robertson, went to meet them there, and he offered to take care of them and to defend them against any future attacks, if they would agree to return with him to their Red River farms.

The settlers asked nothing better, for they disliked to return to Scotland, where they no longer owned anything. The offer was consequently joyfully accepted; all of them returned to the colony, and by the month of August they were again settled down upon their farms.

This Collin Robertson was a former employee of the North-West Company who had gone over to the service of the Hudson Bay Company, and was entirely devoted to Lord Selkirk's work.

Towards the end of the summer a new detachment of settlers came out from Scotland and swelled the number of colonists to two hundred. The fields that the farmers had sown in the spring time, before their dispersion, were not badly damaged. A man named McLeod, with the help of some Hudson Bay Company's servants, had taken care of them. In the autumn the settlers were able to harvest fifteen hundred bushels of wheat, a great deal of other grain and a considerable quantity of potatoes.

In October, Collin Robertson, assisted by the Scotchmen, succeeded in retaking Fort Douglas, which had remained in the hands of the North-West Company.

Matters were in this state, in November, 1815, when Lord Selkirk, on his way back from Scotland, heard, as he landed in New York, about the destruction of his colony. The Partners of the North-West Company wrote him to say that all they had been long predicting had come to pass, and that the Indians had driven out all the settlers and burned the whole establishment.

However, at the same time, a messenger, sent by Collin Robertson, started on the first of November, from the Red River, to inform Lord Selkirk of the re-establishment of his colony, and to ask for assistance to meet the new dangers that threatened it. The bearer of the letters in question was a Canadian *trappeur,* from Maskinongé, in the Province of Quebec, named Jean-Baptiste Lajimonière. He set out on All Saints' Day, taking with him only his gun, a hatchet and a blanket to wrap around himself at night. The roads were all watched by the North-

West Company, whose desire was to prevent all messages from reaching Canada. That journey of eighteen hundred miles, on foot, in the midst of winter, was extremely difficult to accomplish. At Fort William, sentinels were on guard day and night, and the Indians had been warned to allow no person to pass.

In spite of all, Lajimonière was smart enough to get past without being detected, and, on the 6th January, he reached Montreal, where he handed the letters in person to Lord Selkirk. (1)

Those letters informed Lord Selkirk that the Indians had nothing to do with the destruction of the colony, and that all the harm was done by the North-West Company.

Lord Selkirk confided replies to Lajimonière and sent him back to the Red River to inform them that he would start, in person, in the spring time, to bring them assistance. Unfortunately, this time Lajimonière was stopped near Fort William by Indians in the employ of the North-West Company.

Norman McLeod, one of the members of the Company, had instructed them to seize on him and to kill him if he made the slightest resistence. They got hold of him during the night, brutally ill-used him, and carried him prisoner to Fort William. (2)

During the course of the winter the rumor was abroad in Canada that the Red River colony would be again at-

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(1) We have published the details of that extraordinary and most romantic journey in a pamphlet. It was Mgr. Taché who told us the story and incidents of Lajimonière's trip.

(2) From Lajimonière's own story to Mgr. Taché. The order to arrest him had been issued from Fort William and signed by Norman McLeod. The Indians who arrested him got one hundred dollars of a reward which sum placed them in the North-West Company's books.

tacked in the spring. These rumors were set afloat by the North-West Company's agents, in order to create the impression, while preparing the public mind for events, that the Indians had plotted a fresh attempt against the colony.

Lord Selkirk was perfectly convinced, by the documents that he held, that it was the North-West Company which meditated a repetition of the scenes that marked the previous spring time. Immediately on his arrival from Europe, before even he was informed of the re-establishment of the colony by Robertson, he applied to the Secretary of State, Lord Bathurst, in England, to be given protection. The latter place the whole affair in the hands of the Governor of Canada, Lord Drummond, leaving him full liberty to accord the protection requested. But the North-West Company's agents, who were plotting at the Red River, were also scheming in Canada to poison the minds of the people against Lord Selkirk, and unfortunately they only succeeded too well.

Among the Company's agents William McGillivray, a member of the Legislative Council, was one of the most important. Being on good terms with Governor Drummond, who gave him all confidence, he kept the latter posted in regard to the Red River events. It is easy to imagine the kind of information that McGillivray furnished. He made use of all his influence to prevent the Governor from according Lord Selkirk a military force to protect his colony.

He began by pointing out the impossibility of sending a military corps such a distance over a country, through which the hardiest *voyageurs* had difficulty in travelling. Then he called attention to the needlessness of such an expenditure for Canada, since it was easy to settle existing

difficulties without having recourse to such extreme measures. But his principal objection was that the presence of a military force at the Red River would alone suffice to bring about the destruction of all the white people.

When William McGillivray made this assertion, he knew that he was deceiving the Governor, but, as a wiley politician, he did not hesitate to lie in the interest of his Company.

Lord Selkirk vainly insisted; the Governor replied that, on account of the information he had received from McGillivray, his mind was made up not to send any soldiers to the Red River.

The matter, however, was again brought to the Governor's attention, as will be seen by the following letter, written to him by Lord Selkirk, on the 23rd April, 1816.

"Montreal, 23rd April, 1816.

"Your Excellency,

"In looking over the letters which I have recently had the honor of addressing you, it seems that I had not sufficiently acquainted you with the re-establishment of the Red River colony effected last autumn, a little over two months after the time when it appeared to have been destroyed. Your Excellency had been informed that a portion of the settlers had refused to accept the views of the North-West Company, but, being obliged to give way to superior forces, had withdrawn in the direction of the Hudson Bay shores. As soon as the brigands that had been gathered from all sides to attack them, had separated, they returned to the Red River with a considerable reinforcement of people recently arrived from Scotland.

According to the latest advices received, they live on the best terms with the Indians and Half-Breeds of the neighborhood and fear no enemy, unless it be those who might stir up the North-West Company's hatred against them.

"Your Excellency did not condescend to make known to me the reasons why you declined to execute Lord Bathurst's (1) instructions as to 'grant the Red River settlers such help as may not be injurious to His Majesty's service in other parts of his dominions.' It is not impossible that you may have been led to this by the supposition that the settlement had been entirely and irrevocably destroyed. I think it my duty, therefore, to inform you of the real state of things, and at the same time to make you perceive how likely it is that the same persons who had completed the destruction of the colony, last year, may renew their attacks this spring — encouraged therein by their knowledge of Your Excellency's expressed resolve not to send any military succor for the defence of the settlers.

"While I do not exactly know the motives of your resolution, yet I have been whispered important advices concerning the apparent reasons that influenced Your Excellency.

"In as far as I know them, I can assure you with confidence that they are based on false explanations, and I can bind myself to prove it in a most satisfactory manner.

"When I had the honor of seeing Your Excellency last November, I understood that you feared the sight of a military force at the Red River would be looked on with distrust by the Indians. I also understood that you fear-

(1) Lord Bathurst was Secretary of State in England.

ed the necessary cost of sending troops there. Besides, I am informed by the last letters I received from London that, in one of your letters to Lord Bathurst, you allege the impossibility of conveying troops through that country. If these objections have any weight with Your Excellency, I do not doubt that they may be removed.

"As to the Indians, I am so positively informed of their good disposition that I have not the least doubt that His Majesty's troops would be received as friends and protectors by the Indians, as well as by the settlers; so that, on the part of the officers, there would only be need of ordinary prudence to preserve peace and concord.

"As to the difficulties and cost of transporting the troops I am ready to relieve Your Excellency of all responsibility in the direction.

"All that I ask is that you should give orders to the Commissary General to supply from his stores the necessary articles for the equipment of the expedition, leaving to the Government of England to decide whether those things should be considered as being given for the public service, or not, and, in the latter case, I will be responsible for the return of those articles or the payment of their value, as may be required.

"The only other difficulty that I now hear mentioned is that the commanding officer would find himself in a very embarrassing situation as to the course he would have to take should he be called upon to support the civil authority, in the case of difficulties arising between different persons that lay claim to such authority. I flatter myself that these difficulties would be soon raised, by referring the pretentions in question to the opinion of the Attorney-General, or of the Solicitor-General in England. My inmost belief is that Your Excellency should refer the

question to the Attorney-General of this Province, and if his opinion be taken as a rule to follow, the commanding officer would certainly be freed of all responsibility.

"In your letter of the 15th of last month, Your Excellency informs me that, having communicated to Lord Bathurst the reasons of your refusal to send a detachment to the Red River, you could not take any further steps before having received fresh instructions. I, however, take the liberty of observing that your resolution having been communicated to Lord Bathurst before the reception of my letter of the eleventh of November, it must have been based upon information received from the North-West Company, for, at that time, Your Excellency had not received any of any kind, either from me, or from the Hudson Bay Company.

"At that period we could only talk of the fears we entertained regarding the intentions of our enemies. Since I have arrived in this Province, I have gathered together decisive evidence as to the conduct they held; evidence of which Your Excellency could have had no knowledge, when you wrote to Lord Bathurst. You did not know even the tenth part of the facts the proofs of which I bind myself to furnish.

"In my letter of the 11th of last month, I offered to place that evidence under Your Excellency's eyes. By your answer I understood that it was too late to take it into consideration.

"I suppose, however, that the instructions given by Lord Bathurst, in March 1815, have not been recalled, and I think that as long as they have not been, in a formal and positive manner, Your Excellency may act in the matter as you may judge fit; I equally believe that Your Excellency could not be deprived of that right be the res-

olution that you have expressed, while you were in error regarding the true state of things, or while the circumstances differed from those of the present time. The re-establishment of the colony and the probability of it being attacked again loudly demand that you should reconsider the determination that you have manifested. The events that took place last year clearly prove that the presence of a public force alone can protect the inhabitants of the colony against the violence of their enemies; and the instructions which Your Excellency received last year from Lord Bathurst places beyond all doubt that His Majesty's Government has the intention of according them the protection and of not abandoning them to their fate, as if they were strangers to the British Empire.

"If, however, Your Excellency perseveres in declining to do anything until you have received fresh instructions, it is more than probable that another year will pass before the necessary help can be sent; during another year, the settlers will remain exposed to the attacks of their enemies, and there is every reason to fear that many people will pay for that delay with their lives.

"That there is no other means of avoiding that misfortune than by enacting Lord Bathurst's instructions, and that there is no reasonable objection to such a measure are points upon which Your Excellency cannot fail to be convinced, on examining again the subject with the attention it deserves, when you will be in possession of all the evidence and when you shall give to both sides of the question an equal attention.

"I have the honor to be, etc., etc.,

"SELKIRK."

His Lordship received from Governor Drummond the following reply to the foregoing letter:

"Chateau St. Louis,

"Quebec, 27th August, 1816.

"My Lord.

"I received your letter of the 23rd instant, and I am very sorry that Your Lordship thinks it necessary to press me further on a point about which I have already fully and frankly replied.

"I feel that what I wrote on the 25th instant, both to Your Lordship and to the members of the North-West Company, will have the desired effect of preventing the repetition of the crimes and reciprocal proceedings of which complaint has been made to His Majesty's Government, and which are mentioned in such strong terms in Lord Bathurst's despatch, which I cite in my letter.

"I have the honor to be, etc.,

"GORDON DRUMMOND."

After receiving this letter, Lord Selkirk made fresh applications to the Government to grant an inquiry and to have the evidence he had gathered, during the course of the winter, against the North-West Company, established; the only reply he got was that there was nothing to fear for the future, and that measures had been taken to restore tranquility.

Notwithstanding, it was certain that the Company was making every preparation to prevent the re-establishment of the colony. Unfortunately, William McGillivray, the Company's principal agent, had succeeded in capturing the Governor's entire confidence and of placing him under the impression that the greater amount of the blame fell to Lord Selkirk and his agents who, by their imprudent conduct, had irritated the Indians. Events soon proved to him that he had been infamously deceived.

CHAPTER XIII.

SUMMARY.

Lord Selkirk takes at his own expense one hundred licensed soldiers to the Red River, as settlers.— After his departure from Montreal he learns, on the way, that his colony is again destroyed.— He marches on Fort William and seizes it.— The members of the North-West Company are made prisoners, and are sent to Canada. — Explanation of what took place at the Red River during the autumn of 1815 and the winter of 1816.— Cameron made prisoner.— Fort Gibraltar destroyed.— Conspiracy in the North to totally destroy the colony.

Lord Selkirk had lost all hope of securing help for the colony when a circumstance arose that enabled him to see to the safety of his settlement and at the same time to increase the number of the settlers.

In consequence of a treaty of peace, concluded with the United States of America, England had just licensed three regiments of soldiers in Canada: — they were the Meuron, Watteville and Glengary regiments. Any of the soldiers belonging to these regiments, who did not wish to return to Europe, had a right to lands in Canada whereon to settle. Some of them, wishing to go to the Red River, engaged with Lord Selkirk on the same conditions as the Scotch settlers. They exacted, however, that if they were not satisfied with the country he would have them sent back to Europe.

His Lordship hired them in a regular form, by writing, and supplied them with arms, as he had done for the other settlers — a very useful precaution, which had been sanctioned by the Government in 1813.

About the beginning of June, Lord Selkirk, accompanied by his little troop, set out for the Red River. The amount of preparations that he was obliged to make had delayed him until that time.

However, from the first days of May he had sent ahead a detachment of men, in light bark canoes, to announce his coming to the settlers. He had hoped to reach the Red River before fresh attacks would be made on the colony. The Governor of Canada had granted him a staff consisting of one sergeant and seven soldiers as a special body-guard. It was from Drummond Island, in Lake Huron, that the guard was to accompany him, as that island was the last one that had an English garrison.

At the head of the little band, which Lord Selkirk had sent ahead, was Miles Macdonell, the first Governor of the colony and the man whom the North-West Company had, the year previous, sent a prisoner to Montreal. But as no proof was forthcoming of the accusations against him he was not tried, and Lord Selkirk sent him back to his post at Fort Douglas.

When Lord Selkirk and his men reached Sault Ste. Marie, at the foot of Lake Superior, they found two canoes, in one of which was Miles Macdonell. The latter had come back to announce that the colony had been destroyed a second time by the North-West Company and that it was left entirely in ruins.

The details of the event which he had gleaned on his way were most heart-rending. Governor Semple, of the Hudson Bay Company, to whom the care of Fort Douglas had been confided, had been killed with twenty-one of his men. Fort Douglas had fallen into the hands of the North-West Company. A few of the settlers had been brought as prisoners to Fort William, the others were placed in boats and sent to the Hudson Bay.

That afflicting piece of news obliged Lord Selkirk to change his programme. He had, at first, intended to go by way of Fond du Lac, at the extreme west of Lake Superior, then by the St. Louis river and Red Lake, where he was to meet the canoes and provisions that he had ordered to be sent to him from the Red River. He had chosen that route in order to avoid any collision with the North-West Company's establishments, above all with Fort William, which was their strong-hold.

On learning that the colony was destroyed and its inhabitants scattered, he changed his plan. He decided to go direct to Fort William and demand the liberation of his imprisoned people.

Before leaving Sault Ste. Marie, he wrote to Sir John Coape Sherbrooke, the recently appointed Governor of Canada, in these terms:—

"Sault Ste. Marie, 29th July, 1816.

"Your Excellency,

"It is with a feeling of the liveliest sorrow that I have to announce to you the news which has recently come to me of the success which, this year, crowns the awful plottings of the North-West Company. Once more they have succeeded in destroying the Red River settlement, and, this time, they have added thereto the massacre of the Governor and some twenty of the inhabitants.

"The circumstances surrounding that catastrophe and those leading up to it have only reached me in an imperfect manner. I am convinced that the North-West Company is better informed, but the interest it has in presenting the facts under a false light is too evident to necessi-

tate any remark on that subject. All that I am certain of is that Mr. Semple was not a man to act in a sufficiently violent and illegal manner to justify such an attack as that which has taken place. I expect to obtain, in a few days, more exact information on the subject at Fort William, where at present there are many persons who should have personal knowledge of the facts and from whom, as a magistrate, I purpose demanding information.

In the delicate position in which I find myself, being an interested party, I would have wished that some other magistrate would take charge of this affair.

With this view, I applied to two magistrates for the western district in Upper Canada, the only two persons so commissioned (Messrs. Askin and Ermatinger), whom it might be expected would be willing to go to such a distance. But these two gentlemen have engagements that prevent them from acting on my request. I am, consequently, reduced to the alternative of either acting alone or of leaving this fearful crime unpunished. Under such circumstances I think it my duty to act, although I am not without doubts, whether that class of men, accustomed to consider force as the only recognized right, may not openly oppose the execution of the law.

"I have the honor to be, etc., etc.,

"SELKIRK."

From Sault Ste. Marie, Lord Selkirk followed the north shore of Lake Superior, and hastened on to Fort William, reaching there in the afternoon of the 12th August. He had his boats taken into the Kaministiquia river, landed his men and pitched his tents a mile above

the Fort, on the south side of the river. His entire troop numbered one hundred and ten men: two captains, two lieutenants, eighty privates of the Meuron regiment, twenty of the Watteville regiment, six men and one officer of the 37th as Lord Selkirk's body-guard, Captain De-Lorimier, the interpreter, and one Indian from Caughnawaga, near Montreal. There were a great many members of the North-West Company in Fort William. William McGillivray, their head agent, was there to assist at the annual meeting. Around the Fort, two hundred men, Canadians and Indians, were camped.

Lord Selkirk at once sent word to Mr. McGillivray to liberate the persons brought from the Red River and detained prisoners for having taken part in the defence of the colony. Messrs. Pembrun, Pritchard, Nolin and a few others, got permission to go out and to visit Lord Selkirk's camp. The information that they gave him regarding the affairs of the colony was of such a nature that his lordship decided to at once issue warrants of arrest against several of the members of the North-West Company.

The next day, the 13th August, he confided the warrants to John McNabb and M. McPherson, to be executed. Accompanied by nine armed men, in boats, they crossed the Kaministiquia river, and landed near the Fort. Here is how John McNabb tells of their adventure.

"When we had arrived opposite the gate, we landed and we went to the Fort by passing between a number of men who were at the entrance. We asked for Mr. McGillivray who told us to go into his apartment, and there, the warrant was given to him. He acted like a gentleman and prepared to accompany us, asking

a little time to converse with two of his associates, Messrs. Kenneth McKenzie and John McLaughlin. The object of that interview was to have them accompany him and to go bail for him. That was granted and the three gentlemen accompanied us in one of their canoes as they had requested. Shortly after our arrival Lord Selkirk ordered us to arrest McKenzie and McLaughlin, because there were strong accusations against them. That being done, we were told to return to the Fort with Captain d'Orsonnens, Lieutenant Fauché and twenty-five men of the Meuron regiment, to arrest all the other members of the North-West Company. We arrived in front of the gate of the Fort where a great many Indians were assembled. The warrant was given to two of the members, but when we wanted to arrest the third one there was resistance, and they declared that they would not submit to any more orders unless Mr. McGillivray were liberated. Consequently, I was pushed out of the Fort, and they tried to shut the two wings of the door. At that moment I expressed to Captain d'Orsonnens my desire for support; he at once ran to the door with several men and prevented it from being closed. The Captain ordered that the one who had resisted be seized and taken to one of the boats. McPherson and I then advanced into the Fort, supported by Lieutenant Fauché. Captain d'Orsonnens came along promptly with the rest of the men who were armed. They ran ahead and took possession of the two little cannons in the yard inside the door. The Canadians dispersed and all appearance of resistance ceased. We then regularly executed our duty by arresting the other gentlemen named in the warrant."

The prisoners were sent to Lord Selkirk, who, after examining them, allowed them to return for the night to their respective apartments within the Fort, on the express condition that they would be guilty of no hostile act: this they promised on their word of honor.

Twenty armed men, under Lieutenant Graffenreid, spent the night in the Fort, and all the Company's papers were placed under seal.

Although the members of the North-West Company had given their word of honor that everything should remain as his lordship had ordered, yet, in the middle of the night, they sent off a canoe loaded with arms and munitions, and they burned a number of letters of a compromising character. The following day Lord Selkirk's men found, in a field near the Fort, eight barrels of powder that had been carried there during the night. They also found, under a pile of hay in a barn, about fifty guns that had been recently loaded.

These discoveries created a suspicion that there was an intention on the part of the Company's employees of attacking Lord Selkirk's men unawares. For better security the latter were sent to the other side of the Kaministiquia river; the canoes were secured by placing them in the Fort and the prisoners were carefully watched.

As Lord Selkirk could no longer trust to the word of honor of the North-West Company's members, they were imprisoned separately and kept carefully in sight. After having taken all the necessary steps to safe-guard the camp, Lord Selkirk proceeded to the examination of the prisoners, and they appeared to him to be all sufficiently guilty to be sent under escort to York (Toronto) in Upper Canada. They set out on the 18th August, in four canoes that were well supplied with all the requisites for the journey.

Let us now return to the Red River and take up the thread of the events in the month of December, 1815, at the time when J. B. Lajimonière started for Montreal, to bring his message to Lord Selkirk.

That message, as we have seen, was sent by Colin Robertson, who had brought the Scotchmen back from Jack River House to the Red River, whence they had been driven by Cameron after the destruction of the colony. Robertson had also settled them again upon their farms in August, 1815. Having done all this, Robertson sent the news to Lord Selkirk and asked him at the same time to send assistance to prevent any renewal of the previous year's trouble.

The little group of settlers, once more at work on their farms, were strengthened in the autumn by the arrival of a batch of emigrants from the Highlands of Scotland.

Duncan Cameron, the principal author of the wrongs done the emigrants, had returned to the Red River and settled down in the colonial Fort, which had remained in the hands of the North-West Company's servants after the destruction of the colony. From that position he began anew to harass the settlers. Colin Robertson wanted to put an end to his plottings. In the month of October, assisted by the settlers, he re-seized Fort Douglas, drove Cameron out of it, and captured two field pieces and thirty guns that the members of the Company had stolen the previous spring. A few weeks later, finding Cameron among the settlers, he took him prisoner to punish him because he sought again to create a bad spirit in the settlement; he, however, liberated him on the condition and promise that he would remain quiet in his Fort Gibraltar.

Cameron's friend, Alex. McDonell, had also been sent

to his post at Qu'Appelle, to stir up the Indians and Half-Breeds. Letters that Colin Robertson had intercepted revealed the workings of a fresh plot against the settlement. On the 13th March, 1816, Alexander McDonell wrote, from river Qu'Appelle, to his friend Cameron at Fort Gibraltar, in these terms:—(1)

"I received your letter from River Souris. I see with pleasure the hostile movements of our neighbors. A storm is brewing in the North; it is ready to burst on the heads of the miserable people who deserve it. They do not know of the precipice that yawns at their feet. What we did last year was mere child's play.

The new nation (tribe) is advancing under its chiefs to clear out from their country the assassins that have no right thereto: Glorious news from Athabaska." (2)

ALEX. McDONELL."

On the same day A. McDonell wrote to one of his friends at Sault Ste. Marie, as follows:—

"I am at my post at River Qu'Appelle, putting on airs with my sword and golden epaulets, directing and doing your business. Sir William Shaw is gathering together all the Bois-Brulés (Half-Breeds) of the neighboring departments. He has sent orders to his friends in these quarters to hold themselves ready for the war-path. He has already collected all the Half-Breeds as far as Fort La Prairie. God alone knows what the result is going to be."

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(1) Mostly all these letters, of Cameron, McDonell, etc., were in Gaelic.

(2) The glorious news from Athabaska was the death of eighteen employees of the Hudson Bay Company, who had perished of hunger during the winter.

Cuthbert Grant (a Half-Breed), a North-West Company's clerk and a leader among the Half-Breeds, wrote from the same place to Alexander Fraser, another Half-Breed and a clerk of the same Company:—

(13th May, 1816.)

"I take the liberty of sending you a few lines to give you news about our fellow-countrymen, the Half-Breeds of Fort La Prairie and of the Rivière aux Anglais. I am very pleased to tell you that the Half-Breeds are all agreed and ready to execute our orders. They sent one of their number here to learn all about the state of affairs and to know if it is necessary for them all to come. I sent them word to be all here about the middle of May.

"I recommend you to tell Bostonais (the Bostonian) to keep all the Half-Breeds well together; as to those here I will answer for them all, except Antoine Houle, whom I beat this morning and dismissed from the service."

CUTHBERT GRANT."

The same day he wrote to Dougald Cameron, at Sault Ste. Marie, thus:—

"The Bois-Brûlés of Fort La Prairie and of the Rivière aux Anglais will be all here in the spring; I hope that we will carry all with a high hand and that we will never again see the people of the colony at the Red River. The traders will also have to get out for having disobeyed our orders last spring. We will spend the summer at the

Forks (1) for fear they might play us the same game as last year and come back; but if they do so they will be received in a proper manner."

These letters, intercepted by Colin Robertson, were not the only evidence of the plots that were prepared against the colony. In the month of October Duncan Cameron had united all his clerks and servants at Fort Gibraltar to deliberate upon the best means to be taken to chase the settlers out of the country. Peter Pangman, surnamed Bostonais, or Bostonian, told a Canadian named Nolin, a few days later, all about those deliberations. Pangman was of opinion that they should act at once, only he could find no pretext for opening hostilities.

During the whole of the autumn, despite his sworn word, Dnncan Cameron constantly worked to discourage the Scotch farmers and to draw them to his Fort. At Fort Gibraltar, he had a goodly amount of arms that were stolen from the settlers at the time of the taking of Fort Douglas. During the month of March Colin Robertson resolved to try a stroke of hand and to seize Fort Gibraltar. One Sunday evening, about six o'clock, he went down on the ice, and, following the windings of the Red River, he arrived unnoticed at the mouth of the Assiniboine. He was accompanied by a number of settlers. The gate of Fort Gibraltar was open; Robertson and all his men, armed to the teeth, rushed in and in a few moments they had taken Cameron and his clerks prisoners. In order to be rid of all further trouble from that quarter, he raised the Fort to the ground, and brought over to Fort Douglas all the arms, cannons and guns

(1) The Red River, at the place where the colony was established, was called *The Forks*, or *Les Fourches*.

found therein. As to Cameron, he was sent to the Hudson Bay, to be sent to Europe at the opening of navigation. The clerks were all set at liberty on giving their word to remain quiet. Robertson's stroke was a daring one; but from the news he had received from the North, he knew that the colony was marked for destruction and that nothing could be lost by taking immediate and energetic measures.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUMMARY.

Sufferings of the Scotch settlers in the spring of 1816.— Complete lack of provisions in the colony.— The Government sends to Qu'Appelle for some.— The Hudson Bay Company's men who convey back the supplies are attacked by the North-West Company's people and made prisoners.— Preparations made by the members of the North-West Company to destroy the colony.— Battle of the 19th June. — The North-West Company takes Fort Douglas.— The colony is destroyed for a second time.

The Scotch settlers had to undergo great privations during the spring of 1816. All they had to live on was the product of the hunt brought in by the Half-Breeds camped at Pembina. From there the provisions had to be carried seventy miles to Fort Douglas. It was heavy work. The meat was placed in small quantities on long narrow sleds — like toboggans — and for want of horses the men had to do the hauling. The journey lasted several days. But in the month of March the situation became more unbearable. The Half-Breeds, being threatened by the Company, refused to sell meat to the colony. A few, however, touched with pity, had some brought over secretely, saying, at the same time, to the settlers: — "Take care of what is being prepared against you. For God's sake take care,"

As the season advanced the rumors became daily more threatening. It was circulated that armed bands of Indians and Half-Breeds, from the West and the North,

were on their way to exterminate the Red River settlers. The anxiety of all these poor people was great; and, in reality, there was good cause for fear.

About the end of March, Mr. Semple, who had been appointed Governor of the Hudson Bay Company, in London, reached Fort Douglas, having, during the winter, visited several of the trading posts in the North.

On the Qu'Appelle river, the Hudson Bay Company had a Fort built near that of the North-West Company. There they had in reserve a large quantity of meat and furs. In the month of April Governor Semple, seeing that the settlers could no longer secure provisions from the Half-Breeds and that they suffered severely from hunger, sent one Pambrun, an official of the Hudson Bay Company, to the Qu'Appelle river to fetch some bags of meat and furs.

When Pambrun had loaded five boats, he started back, accompanied by Mr. Sutherland, the clerk of the trading post and twenty-two servants. In those boats he had six hundred bags of dressed meat and twenty packages of furs.

On the 12th May, while they were descending the Assiniboine river, Pambrun and his men were attacked by some forty-five servants of the North-West Company, led by Cuthbert Grant, Rodrick McKenzie, Peter Pangman (the Bostonian), and a Canadian named Brisebois.

They were made prisoners and taken to a North-West Company's Fort, a short distance from that of the Hudson Bay Company. Pambrun's men were let go and sent back to their own Fort. But he was kept at the North-West Company's Fort.

Alexander McDonell informed him *that his intention was to starve* the Red River settlers until they agreed to

accept the conditions that were offered them, and that he intended to do the same with all the Hudson Bay Company's employees. According to Pambrun's sworn declaration these conditions were that all the settlers should leave the Red River and return to Europe.

Alexander McDonell left Fort Qu'Appelle in the middle of May with all his force of Canadians, Indians and Half Breeds. They got into canoes that they had seized and were escorted by a mounted band of Half-Breeds who rode along the river bank.

On the way down he did not hesitate to say, in presence of Pambrun, that the previous year's affair was nothing compared to what was going to happen to the colony.

In passing by Brandon House, one of the Hudson Bay Company's posts, he sent twenty-five men to seize that Fort and all that it contained of arms, provisions and furs. The property of the employees in the neighborhood was pillaged and destroyed.

A man name Lavigne, a Canadian, who happened to be present, was forced to join their party and was placed under Cuthbert Grant's orders. To save his life he submitted.

Their boats reached Portage de la Prairie on the 15th June. McDonell's force numbered one hundred and twenty-five men. He unloaded all the bags of meat, built them into a barricade and flanked it with two cannons. These cannons had been stolen from the colony the year before. When the work of unloading was done he divided his men into five small companies under command of Grant, Lacerte, Houle, Fraser and Lamarre. All of they were well mounted and armed.

On the 18th June, seventy of these horsemen left Por-

tage de la Prairie to go to the Red River: the others were left to guard the meat and furs. On that same day, two Sauteux Indians, who knew of the plot against the colony, hastened to the Governor to warn him that the settlers would be attacked next day and that the Fort would be taken by the Half-Breeds and the employees of the Company; and, they, added, that every one would be massacred if the slightest resistance were offered. (1)

The North-West Company, in writings intended for its own defence, stated that seventy horsemen, sent from Portage de la Prairie to the Red River, were on their way to bring provisions to the Company's men who were going from Fort William to Lake Winnipeg. Even to our day many readers have allowed themselves to be taken in by that hypocritical explanation. It is extremely important that the facts should be set forth in their true light and that the lies invented to cover up crimes should be eventually made known to posterity.

The seventy horsemen sent from Portage de la Prairie, by Alex. McDonell, under command of Cuthbert Grant, were all servants of the North-West Company; there were only five Indians among them. Being all on horseback, they naturally only carried enough of provisions for their purpose. None were sent after them.

Leaving on the 18th June from Portage de la Prairie, which is sixty miles from the Red River, these horsemen were in front of Fort Douglas the next day — the 19th June. As they passed Fort Douglas they pretended to go down towards the Red River; but such was not their intention.

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(1) Madame Lajimonière and her children were at Fort Douglas at the time, and it is from her that we have the story of the warning given by the two Indians.

Canoes from Fort William, with about one hundred men, were to have been down the Red River about the 16th June. These men, under the command of Norman McLeod, a member of the North-West Company, were armed from head to foot, and had two small cannons with them. They had been sent by order of William McGillivray, who, by the first of April, had left Montreal for the purpose of reaching the Red River before Lord Selkirk. He had taken with him, at his own expense, two licensed officers of the Meuron regiment — Brumby and Messani — and had also hired a Swiss soldier named Reinhard. The canoes that he had sent to the Red River contained cases of arms for the Half-Breeds and Indians. All these soldiers had been sent to meet the northern bands that McDonell had stirred up and to crush out the settlers if they made the slightest resistance. McLeod's canoes had been delayed and did not reach the lower part of the Red River till the 20th June, instead of the 16th.

These men were abundantly supplied with provisions and did not need the assistance from Portage de la Prairie.

The North-West Company, in a pamphlet published for the purpose of explaining what it calls the unfortunate affair of the 19th June, at the place called La Grenouillière — Frog Lake — affirms that they had no intention of attacking Fort Douglas and that the men, on leaving Portage de la Prairie, had received formal orders to pass far out on the prairie so as to avoid any meeting with the Hudson Bay officials.

This is true enough, but it is about the only truth that we have been able to find in that pamphlet: the rest is all a tissue of lies and hypocritical protestations, intended to deceive all readers who are strangers to those events. The whole truth is what we have just related.

The seventy horsemen, servants of the North-West Company, had really received orders to pass several miles away from Fort Douglas, not only to avoid meeting the Hudson Bay people, but so as not to be seen by them, if possible. Lakes and swamps, however, prevented them from passing as far from the Fort as they would have liked.

Alex. McDonell, who had hatched the plot all winter, sent his men to meet those of Norman McLeod, who was coming up from Fort William with an entire military equipment. Measures had been taken to have all the North-West Company's brigades — from North, West and East — meet, about the 20th June, at the mouth of the Red River. From that point, a perfectly equipped band of about a hundred men were to attack the colony, make the settlers prisoners, or else massacre them if they offered any resistance. Once the settlers would be prisoners, Fort Douglas, which was only defended by some thirty men who had not provisions for more than three or four days, would fall an easy prey. As a military tactic the plan was well conceived; but, under existing circumstances, it was merely an act of brigandage and a crime of the worst kind.

Four accounts of the awful scenes of the 19th June, 1810, were given on oath by honest citizens who had been present at the battle, and all four agree as to the facts. We will reproduce that of Michael Heden, who was in Fort Douglas and who accompanied Governor Semple, when the latter went out to meet the North-West Company's seventy horsemen as they came in sight of the Fort.

EVIDENCE OF MICHAEL HEDEN.

Taken at Montreal, the 16th September, 1816, before Thomas McCord, Justice of the Peace.

"On the 19th June, 1816, about five in the afternoon, a man, who was in the watch house, came to notify Governor Semple that a party of horsemen was approaching the establishment. The Governor went to the watch-house to observe them with a field-glass. Two persons, Mr. Rogers, recently arrived from England, and Mr. Bourke, the colonial storekeeper, went with him and also took observations of the party. Everyone then saw that a band of armed horsemen was approaching the place in hostile manner. In consequence, Governor Semple asked that about twenty men should go with him to meet the horsemen and learn their intention. The troop entered the establishment a little below the Fort. (1)

"When they saw Governor Semple coming towards them they immediately galloped in his direction and surrounded him as well as his men; then they sent some of their's forward to speak to the Governor. It was a man named Boucher, the son of a Montreal canteen-keeper, whom they chose as spokesman.

"When they got near the Governor they asked him, in an insolvent tone, what he and his men wanted. The Governor, in his turn, asked what he and his men wanted. We want our Fort, answered Boucher; 'Why did you

(1) That is to say, about a mile below the Canadian Pacific Railway's large station at Winnipeg.

destroy it, you d—— scoundrel, that you are ?' The Governor then seized hold of the bridle of Boucher's horse and at once one of the horsemen fired his gun and killed Mr. Nolt, a Hudson Bay Company's clerk, who had accompanied the Governor. Boucher then ran towards his own men and immediately, from the same place, a second shot was fired, which wounded Governor Semple. On being wounded the Governor shouted to his men: '*do all you can to save yourselves*'; but those who accompanied him, instead of seeking to save themselves, gathered around the Governor to see what injury he had sustained, and while they were thus gathered in a small group in the centre, the party of horsemen, who had surrounded them, fired a general discharge into them, killing the greater number of them. Those that remained standing took off their hats and asked for quarter; but it was in vain. The horsemen rushed upon them and killed nearly all of them with skull-crackers or gun-stalks. The deposant (Heden) ran away in the confusion down to the river which he crossed in a canoe, with one Daniel McKay, and both were able to get to the Fort by nightfall.

Mr. Pritchard, in his account, says:—

"In a few minutes all our people were killed or wounded. Captain Rogers, who had fallen, got up and came to me; seeing that all were killed or wounded, I shouted to him: 'For the love of God, surrender.' He ran towards the enemy, with that intention, and I followed him. He raised his hands and ask for grace. Then a Half-Breed, a son of Colonel William McKay, pierced his head with

a gunshot; another, while pronouncing fearful imprecations, opened his stomach with a knife. Luckily for me, a man named Lavigne united his efforts with my own and succeeded, with great difficulty in saving me from my friend's fate .

"The wounded were finished with guns, knives or skull-crackers, and the barbarians perpetrated the most horrible cruelties on their bodies. Mr. Semple, that kind and mild man, lying upon his side (for his hip was broken), and with his head resting on one of his hands, spoke to the Commander in chief of the enemy and asked him if he were not Mr. Grant. The latter having answered 'yes,' the Governor added: 'I am not mortally wounded, and if you could have me carried to the Fort, I think I might recover.' Grant promised to do so and confided him immediately to the care of a Canadian who later on reported that an Indian of their party had shot him in the breast with his gun. I begged of Grant to get me the Governor's watch, or at least his seals, in order to send them to his friends, but it was useless.

"We numbered twenty-eight, and of that number twenty-one were killed or wounded.

"The leaders of the enemy's party were Grant, Fraser, Ant. Houle, and Bourassa (three Half-Breeds)."

Amongst the seventy horsemen there were only six Indians. These are their names: Kattigons, Shanicastan, Okematan, Nidigonsojibwan, Pimicantous, Wegitané. All the others were employees of the North-West Com-

pany, and English and Canadian Half-Breeds hired for the occasion.

During the perpetration of the massacre, there was a camp of Cree Indians near Fort Douglas, none of whom took part in the affair: on the contrary, they gave evidence of being deeply afflicted by the unfortunate transaction. It was these Indians that, on the morrow, gathered up the bodies on the prairie and buried them. The chief of that camp was called *Pigouis.* (1)

In the evening the prisoners that were taken at the colony were conducted to Grant's camp, at the place called La Grenouillière.

Pritchard, continuing his account says:—

"When I was at La Grenouillière, Mr. Grant told me that the Fort would be attacked during the night and that, if our people fired a single shot, they would all be massacred. 'You see,' he said, 'that we gave no *quarter;* now, if the slightest resistance is made, we will spare no person, man, woman, or child.'

Fraser added: *Robertson called us blacks,* he will see that the color of our hearts does not belie the color of our bodies.' Believing that the destruction of those unfortunate people was inevitable, I asked Grant if there were no way of saving those poor women and children; I begged of him to have pity on them, in the name of his own father who was their fellow-countryman. He then replied that if we would deliver up to him all the goods in the Fort store, that he would let us go in peace and

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(1) All the bodies were buried at the bottom of a dry ravine, at the spot where to-day stands the Winnipeg city-hall. The person who gave us this information was then a young child, and assisted at the burial. It is there that the remains of Governor Semple repose. (*Statement of Reine Lajimonière, an eye-witness.*)

would give us an escort to conduct us beyond the North-West Company's lives, at Lake Winnipeg; and he added that the escort was to protect us against two other bands of Half-Breeds that were expected every minute, and that were commanded by William Shaw and by Simon McGillivray — son of the Hon. William McGillivray. I wanted to carry his proposal to Mr. MacDonell, who was in command at the colony, but Grant's men would not allow me to go. I spoke to them for a while, and then addressing Grant, I said:—'Mr Grant, you know me, and I am certain you will answer for my return body for body.' He then consented to let me go.

"On reaching the Fort I beheld a sight too fearful to describe. The wives and children and relatives of those who had been killed were plunged in the depths of despair, and while weeping over the dead they were filled with terror over the fate of the survivors.

"I should say that when I left La Grenouillière, the night was already advanced and that Mr. Grant accompanied me as far as the spot where I had seen the best of my friends fall under the blows of the barbarians. The next morning, the day-light only showed me too well that which the night had hidden; I mean the sight of those disfigured and hacked up bodies. According to what I saw, I believe that not more than four of our people had been mortally wounded, and that the rest had been inhumanly massacred.

"After three goings and comings between the Half-Breed camp and the Fort, we arrived at an arrangement. An inventory was taken of all the goods and delivered to the North-West Company. Two days later the settlers

were flung pell-mell into boats and sent off unescorted towards Lake Winnipeg." (1)

The clerks of the North-West Company took possesion of Fort Douglas and the Scotch settlement was wiped out for a second time.

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(1) When Alex. McDonell returned to Portage de la Prairie to announce to his people the sad business at La Grenouillère, he made use of this language: "Good news! G—— D—— it, twenty-two Englishmen killed." Such language does not indicate any great sorrow for the event. (*Evidence of Chrysologue Pambrun.*)

(2) See Note 3, at the end of the book.

CHAPTER XV.

SUMMARY.

Fresh persecutions undergone by the settlers before their departure for the Hudson Bay. — Assassination of Mr. Keveny, a Hudson Bay Company official. — The prisoners in Montreal, are admitted to bail.— William McGillivray sends Mr. de Rocheblave to Fort William to arrest Lord Selkirk.— He fails in the attempt.— Lord Selkirk sends soldiers to the Red River.— Fort Douglas re-taken.

The barbaric expulsion of the Scotch settlers, driven from their homes, cast without clothing and almost without provisions into miserable boats, exposed to perish on their journey, resembles somewhat the expulsion of the Acadians a century earlier. In a certain sense, we may say that this odious deed presents something even more brutal and more inexplicable. The Acadians were French Catholics, and their persecutors were English Protestants; there was, consequently, a race and creed antipathy between the two peoples, which may sufficiently explain their conduct towards each other. But at the Red River no such conditions existed; there we find Scotchmen persecuting Scotchmen, all of whom, or nearly all, were of the same religion. The only crime of which the victims were accused was that of having sought to introduce civilization into the Red River country. Had the North-West Company only this one crime in its record, it would suffice to disgrace it before posterity: but this was only one of very many.

The settlers who were thus hunted away numbered two

hundred. From the north end of Lake Winnipeg, to which point the boats took them, they had to walk to the Hudson Bay, and thence they had to reach England by means of the Company's ships.

These poor people, so deserving of pity after all they had suffered, hoped, at least, that when they would have passed the limits of the colony, they would be free from fresh annoyances and that their enemies would allow them to go in peace; but the hatred that the members of the Company entertained was not yet satisfied. Those heartless men were inaccessible to any feeling of compassion.

At the foot of the Red River, before entering Lake Winnipeg, the exiles met Norman McLeod's men coming from Fort William. As soon as these latter saw the boats containing the emigrants they set up a war-whoop, like so many Indians, and asked at once if Governor Semple was with them. They had not yet learned that he had been killed, but as they expected that all the settlers would be driven from the country, they naturally expected that the Governor would be with them.

He — McLeod — ordered those who were steering the boats to land them and to make all hands, men, women and children get out. He then took possession of the keys of all their trunks to open and examine them. He took from the settlers all their books, papers, accounts, letters, etc., and he even seized upon a few things that had belonged to Governor Semple. He had Pritchard, Heden and Bourke made prisoners to be sent to Montreal. The settlers were kept three days at that place, and during that time the women and children were seated on the shore eating the remains of the small amount of provisions that had been given them for their long journey. Finally, after a thousand annoyances, they were allowed to embark again and to continue their journey.

After the exposition of McLeod's abominable conduct, in concert with his North-West fellow-associates, who had kept him informed regarding the plottings during the winter, it is hard to say how the Company could dare claim that it had no bad intention in sending the horsemen down the Red River on the 19th June.

The details we have so far given leave no room for doubt as to the evil intentions of those who caused the massacre at LaGrenouillère. What we have further to describe only serves to establish it the more.

Norman McLeod gave rewards to all those who had helped in destroying the colony.

Augustin Lavigne, in the evidence which he gave on the 17th August, 1816, at Fort William, before Lord Selkirk, reports the words used by McLeod to the Half-Breeds, when distributing the rewards. He said:—

"My relatives, my equals, who have helped us in our need, I have brought you clothing. I had thought that I would only find some forty of you with Mr. McDonell; but you are more numerous than that. I have forty suits of clothes; those who are in greatest need of them may take them; the others will be dressed the same way this fall, when the canoes come up."

McLeod went on to Fort Douglas, and returned immediately to his men down the Red River, to start with the prisoners for Fort William.

In order to prevent the truth concerning the disastrous scenes just related, reaching Montreal, the North-West Company had cut all communications, and no message could be sent from the Red River to Canada. The Associates believed themselves to be absolute masters of the situation, and were determined to hold their position at all risks. The news that Lord Selkirk had left Montreal

with soldiers bothered them very little, and they expected to rid themselves of him, as they did of the settlers, either by force or by assassination.

One evening, in the camp near Rainy Lake, Burke, who was a prisoner, overheard a conversation between McGillis and Alex. McDonell, who had hatched the plot at Lake Qu'Appelle.

Runners had come in to say that Lord Selkirk would come by way of Red Lake. "The Half-Breeds," said McDonell, "will catch his lordship early in the morning, while he is asleep. They might use Bostonais to fire a gun-shot into him."

Burke was also able to catch these words:—*"We have pushed things pretty far: but we will say that the Governor's people came to attack the Half-Breeds, and they met their fate."*

"What plan had you formed to destroy the settlement?" asked McDonell of McGillis. The latter made answer: "to attack, in the first place, the Fort." "Had you done so," said McDonell, "you would have lost the half of your men; the safest way was to starve out the people in the Fort, for they had only provisions for two or three days."

Burke related what he had heard to two other prisoners.

McLeod, with his prisoners, reached Fort William in the month of July; he only remained there a few days. He returned to meet the members of the Company from Athabaska and to inform them that Lord Selkirk was moving towards Fort William with a large body of men and to warn them to redouble their watchfulness, so as to prevent any one from getting inland or bringing news to his lordship.

About the 10th August, McLeod met the Athabaska canoes, in one of which was Archie McLellen, a member of the North-West Company. They told him that an official of the Hudson Bay Company, named Keveny, had reached Lake Bonnet, on the Winnipeg river, in a boat, and that his attendants complained of having been ill-treated by him. At once McLeod issued a warrant for the arrest of Keveny and entrusted the execution of it six Half-Breeds. Keveny was arrested in his tent, placed in irons, and taken to McLeod's camp. There he was robbed of his papers, which were compromising for the North-West Company, and McLellen told Reinhard, one of the Company's clerks, to go and kill him in some out-of-the-way place. Here is how Reinhard told the story before the Courts.

"Make the prisoner believe," said McLellen, "that he must go down to Rainy Lake. We cannot kill him among the Indians. We will go on farther, and when you shall have found a favourable place you will know what you have to do."

"We went down the river," continued Reinhard, "for a quarter of a league, to a place where it formed an elbow. Keveny, then wanting to go ashore, I told Mainville, who was with us, that we were far enough. 'You may fire,' I said, 'when he returns to get on board again.'

"When he returned, Mainville fired a shot at him, striking him in the neck. When I perceived that the shot was not fatal and that Keveny wanted to speak again, I ran my sword twice through his back, near the heart, so as to end his suffering. Then, on returning to McLellen's camp, the latter sent Cadot to meet me and to find out if Keveny had been killed. As I replied that he was killed, he said: 'Mr. McLellen warns you not to say that

he has been killed.' I made answer: 'I will not hide the affair, for it was Mr. McLellen, himself, who ordered me to kill him.'"

This declaration, made in Court, had been corroborated by the evidence of two Canadian *voyageurs* of the North-West, J. Bte. Lapointe and Hubert Faye, both of whom were aware of the murder and had attempted to prevent it. Keveny's body was left on an island and was not buried.

This fresh crime need not surprise the reader. When an organization comes to the point of massacring hundreds of people in order to keep a country in a state of savagery, because their commercial interests may benefit thereby, the murder of a simple individual is for them a matter of minor importance.

When the authors of this crime, on their way down, heard of the taking of Fort William and the arrest of the members of the Company, they retraced their steps, and when back to strengthen the northern trading-posts and to await orders from Canada. Reinhard, the soldier who had killed Keveny, went to Fort St. Pierre on Rainy Lake.

Let us now return to the North-West Company's Partners, who were made prisoners by Lord Selkirk. As soon as they reached Montreal they asked to be allowed to go on bail until their trial. The privilege was granted them, but the crimes of which they were accused appeared so grave to Lord Drummond, that he would take the responsibility of judging them without first consulting Mr. Gone, a civil officer of Upper Canada. Communication between the Provinces was not as rapid then as to-day; the correspondence between the Governor and Mr. Gone dragged too long for the liking of the North-West Company's associates.

Mr. McGillivray, seeing that the season advanced and that all communication between the members of the Company in the North and those in Montreal were interrupted, took upon himself to send constables to Fort William to arrest Lord Selkirk and to bring him, as a prisoner, to Montreal. Such a proceeding must seem strange, for it is a rare thing to find a prisoner over whom heavy accusations rest, taking steps to have his accuser arrested.

He at once sent Mr. de Rocheblave to Sault Ste. Marie, to there await a Sheriff who would soon meet him, and who would have warrants for the arrest of his lordship and his officers. The magistrate to whom McGillivray confided the warrants was Mr. Smith, Sheriff of Upper Canada.

De Rocheblave reached Sault Ste. Marie on the 19th October; he there await some days for the coming of the Sheriff with the warrants; but seeing that the latter delayed too long and that the season was advancing, he applied for other warrants to a magistrate at St. Joseph's. Then he set out with twelve constables for Fort William, where he arrived on the seventh of November. De Rocheblave had not counted upon Lord Selkirk's means of self-protection, nor upon his determination to follow to the end his claims against the North-West Company.

On reading Mr. De Rocheblave's summons, Lord Selkirk reflected a moment; then, considering the route already followed in quest of justice, he refused point blank to submit to the warrants of the constables. He at once summoned all his soldiers, and ordered Mr. De Rocheblave to leave the Fort at once, if he did not wish to be made a prisoner himself.

Seeing that it was useless to insist, and that the object

of his mission was completely missed, he returned to Sault Ste. Marie, where he met Mr. Smith who had just arrived with his warrants. They got into boats, with a large re-enforcement of men, and took the road to Fort William. But the elements turned against them. The wind arose to a violent pitch, and their boat was smashed on the shore. With difficulty they escaped and returned to Montreal, which they only reached in the end of December, having done most the journey on foot.

On his side, Lord Selkirk did not remain idle at Fort William. After De Rocheblave's departure he sent Captain d'Orsonnens to take Fort St. Pierre. As that Fort contained munitions and provisions the North-West Company's people refused to open the gates and made a pretence of getting ready for a siege. But as their communications were interrupted and they were not aware how events might turn, they finally decided to give up the Fort, on condition that they would be at liberty to go away. However, Reinhard, the soldier, who had killed Keveny and who had taken refuge in that Fort, was made prisoner and sent to Fort William.

In return for all damage caused by the Company to his colony, Lord Selkirk took possession of another Fort that was built at the end of Lake Superior, at a place called *Fond du Lac*. From that place his lordship's soldiers went to the Red River to take Fort Douglas, which had remained in the hands of the North-West Company. Conducted by Indians, they went by way of Red Lake, and, in the month of February, reached the Red River at a spot a little above Pembina.

Thence they followed the Red River to about a dozen miles above Fort Douglas, and then taking a westerly course, they went into camp on the banks of the Assini-

'boine at about four miles from its mouth. As that river was heavily wooded on either side they could easily escape the notice of the people at the Fort. They took advantage of a violent snow-storm to make a night attack on the Fort, supplied with good rope ladders they easily scaled the high palisades that protected the Fort, and, without firing a single shot, they were, in less than half an hour, masters of the place. No person in the Fort attempted the slightest resistance. The sight of these well-armed soldiers made the employees of the North-West Company perceive that the roles had changed, and that, thenceforth, the Red River settlers could count upon effective protection.

The next day the soldiers took up quarters in Fort Douglas, there to await the arrival of Lord Selkirk.

CHAPTER XVI.

SUMMARY.

The settlers recalled to their farms.— Lord Selkirk passes the summer at Fort Douglas.— Free grants of lands.— Petition drawn up, in the name of the Catholic population, by Lord Selkirk, to have missionaries.— Letter of Lord Selkirk to the Bishop of Quebec.— Plottings of the North-West Company to prevent the missionaries from going to the Red River.— Lord Selkirk's generous gift to the Catholic mission.— Instructions given by the Bishop of Quebec to the missionaries. concerning their conducting of the missions.

The settlers driven towards the Hudson Bay stopped, as they had done the first time, at the north end of Lake Winnipeg. They still conceived a hope of returning to their farms, which they had left with deep regret.

After the re-taking of Fort Douglas a messenger was sent after them to bid them return to the colony, where Lord Selkirk would indemnify them, at least in part, for the losses they had sustained. They consequently all took the road again to the Red River, which they reached in June, 1817. The colony arose from its ashes and took on new life.

Lord Selkirk established his camp near the Fort and began an investigation into the unfortunate events of the previous year.

The Half-Breeds, freed for all time to come from the malign influence of the North-West Company's Partners, became the best of friends with the settlers, and, for the future, the best of understanding reigned among them.

Lord Selkirk granted his colonists lands free from all tax. To the soldiers whom he had brought with him he gave lands along a river that he called the German River (Rivière des Allemands) (1), because the greater number of the soldiers were Germans.

In his relations with the people of the country — Canadians, Half-Breeds, and Indians around Fort Douglas — Lord Selkirk felt that, to insure the future of the colony, the life-imparting spirit of religion was needed and that mere human prudence could not suffice for the firm accomplishment of such an undertaking. Moreover, a number of the Canadian *voyageurs,* once out of the Company's service, desired to have priests at the Red River and looked forward to their arrival to settle permanently in the country.

Lord Selkirk took advantage of the good dispositions of his people to have them address a formal petition to the Bishop of Quebec, expressing the ardent desire of all the Catholics at the Red River to have resident priests among them. On his part, Lord Selkirk promised them to use all his influence to have their request granted.

The following is the petition, with the names of all who signed it:

"To His Lordship, Mgr. Plessis,
Bishop of Quebec.

"The undersigned, inhabitants of the Red River, most humbly represent that there is a Christian population established in this country who propose to make it their home; that the said population is composed, in part, of

(1) This river is now called *the Seine.*

Canadians who, having formerly been hired in the service of the traders and having completed the term of their engagement, are known as free Canadians, and in part of new colonists who are natives of different European countries.

"That since their residence here the Canadians have been without any religious instruction, without any pastor to guide them by his counsels in the way of rectitude or to administer to them the salutary rites of the Church.

"That the children of the native Christians, who are vulgarly called Half-Breeds (*Métis* or *Bois-Brulé*), amount to only three or four hundred men scattered over a country several hundred leagues in extent.

"That these Half-Breeds are all well disposed people and of a mild and peaceful character, and would not have taken part in the unfortunate events that have taken place, were it not that they were pushed on by their superiors; that being informed by evil-intentioned people that they were the owner of the soil, that it was their duty to drive off the people generally known as the *English*, (*les Anglais*), and having received promises that they would be supported and rewarded, they believed that in driving them from the country they were doing a glorious and meritorious deed.

"That to prove that no enmity exists between the Half-Breeds and the white people, it suffices to know that they have almost all hired in the service of the whites and that those who are generally known as the *English* are the only ones who received ill-treatment at their hands.

"That nearly all the Christian population, both free Canadians and new colonists, belong to the Roman Catholic religion.

"That everything is now quiet here and that the under-

signed firmly believe that, with the service of a Catholic priest, nothing will be lacking to make that tranquility permanent and to preserve for the future the happiness of the country.

"Wherefore, the undersigned beg, in the name of their hope in a future life, that you should accord them the assistance of a priest of their holy religion, an assistance that their conduct will deserve, if it be irreproachable, and that will be only the more necessary, if it should be considered faulty."

(Signed,) J. Bte. Marsolais.
Louis Nolin.
Augustin Cadotte.
François Eno dit Delorme.
Jacques Hamelin.
Angus McDonell.
Charles Bousquet.
Jacques Hamelin, jr.
J. Bte. Hamelin.
Louis Nolin.
Augustin Poirier dit Desloges.
Michel Monnet dit Bellehumeur.
Louis L'Epicier dit Savoie.
Charles Boucher.
Justin Latimer.
Pierre Brussel.
Jean Rocher.
Jacques Bain.
Pierre Souci.
Louis Blondeau.
Joseph Ducharme.
Joseph Bellegarde.
Joseph Fraser.

Before his departure for Montreal, in April, 1816, Lord Selkirk, had himself, written the following letter to the Bishop of Quebec.

"To His Lordship, Mgr. Plessis,
Bishop of Quebec.

"My Lord,

"I have been informed by Mr. Miles McDonell, the former Governor of the Red River, that in the course of a conversation he had had with Your Lordship, last autumn, he had suggested to you the sending of a missionary into this country, to give the benefits of religion to the large number of Canadians therein settled and who live, according to Indian custom, with the Indian women whom they have married. I am convinced that a zealous and intelligent ecclesiastic would perform incalculable good among those people with whom the spirit of religion is not lost. It would be with the greatest satisfaction that I would co-operate with all my strength for the success of such a work, and if Your Lordship will select a suitable subject to undertake it, I do not hesitate to assure him my consideration and to offer him all the help that Your Lordship may deem necessary.

"I heard it said that Your Lordship had formed the project of sending two ecclesiastics this summer to Lake Superior and to Rainy Lake, to there meet the *voyageurs* in the North-West Company's service, when they return from the interior. As all those people are in great need of spiritual help, I am happy to learn that news; still, if you will allow me to express an opinion, I think that a missionary, resident at the Red River, would realize

much better your design; for, from that place, he could, in the winter, visit the trading posts at Rainy Lake and at Lake Superior, at a time when the people meet there in greatest numbers.

"However, if Your Lordship, for the moment, does not find this proposition practicable, I think that an ecclesiastic, who would be ready to start from Montreal at the opening of navigation, to go on to Rainy Lake, could still do a great deal of good. Mr. McDonell is to set out with a light canoe as soon as the ice breaks, so that he will reach the Red River, about the end of May or the beginning of June. He would be very happy to have with him as companion, a missionary who might sojourn a few weeks with the Canadians of the Red River, before the return of the North-West *voyageurs* to Rainy Lake and Lake Superior."

"I have the honor to be, etc.,

(Signed,) "SELKIRK."

Lord Selkirk started from the Red River at the beginning of November, 1819, and reached Montreal about the end of December.

On the 29th January, 1818, Mr. Samuel Gale, who had spent the winter at Fort Douglas with Lord Selkirk, wrote a letter to Mgr. Plessis, in which he explained to His Lordship the pressing needs of the poor Catholics, scattered over the prairies of the North-West, for religious succor, and their ardent desire to have priests among them to instruct them and their families. In the same letter he stated that the Hon. Chartier de Lotbinière was the bearer of a petition signed by the Red River set-

tlers, and that he would soon go to Quebec to present the same to His Lordship.

On the 11th February, 1818, Mgr. Plessis received the petition in question, and in reply to Mr. Gale said that he would second with all his strength Lord Selkirk's laudable project. "He will find in my clergy," said His Lordship, "priests who will devote themselves to that good work, and without other motive than the glory of God and the salvation of souls."

The North-West Company, that wanted to wipe out Lord Selkirk's colony in order to keep the Red River country in a savage and uncivilized condition, looked with unfavorable eye upon the negotiations commenced between His Lordship and the Bishop of Quebec. With the missionaries Christian civilization would come to the Red River, and thenceforth all the criminal methods used by the partners of the North-West Company to monopolize the fur trade would be impossible. They knew this well, and they did not fail to plot against Lord Selkirk's project.

Everywhere they declared that it was fool-hardy to attempt to send priests into those wild and barbaric regions; that the expense of supporting them there would be enormous, and that their success would be almost null. They even succeeded in winning over certain priests to this opinion. One day, in Montreal, as Rev. Mr. Provencher was starting out for that mission, the superior of a religious community said in his presence: "What is the use of sending missionaries so far away? Cannot everybody give baptism?" "No doubt," replied Mr. Provencher, "but the Church has other sacraments which everybody cannot administer." (Extract of a letter of Mgr. Provencher.) However, the most influential people in

Canada were in favor of that mission. Apart from Lord and Lady Selkirk, the most important members of the Hudson Bay Company (nearly all Protestants) asked to have the Catholics missionaries. The Governor-General of Canada, himself, headed a subscription for the establishment of a permanent Catholic mission at the Red River.

It would be difficult not to see in this the Finger of Divine Providence indicating the merciful designs of heaven upon those poor people so abandoned in an uncivilized land. When the subscription list, headed by the Governor-General, was presented to the gentlemen of the North-West Company they politely declined to add their signatures thereto.

In the course of the month of March, 1818, Mgr. Plessis informed Rev. Mr. Provencher, of Kamouraska, that he had selected him to go and establish a mission at the Red River. Despite the magnitude of the sacrifice that his Bishop asked him to make, he did not hesitate one moment in accepting. On the 16th April he bade *adieu* to his parishioners, and started for Montreal where, with his companion, Rev. Sévère Dumoulin, he was to set out for the Red River.

As Lord Selkirk feared that the North-West Company would put obstacles in the way of the missionaries, he suggested to Mgr. Plessis that they should be accompanied by an official of the Indian Department. On writing to Mgr. Plessis, he said: "I would presume to recommend that Your Grace request of His Excellency the Governor-General, that Captain J. Baptiste Chevalier De Lorimier be appointed to accompany the missionaries as far as the Red River; that gentleman has large experience in travel and knows exactly how to deal with the *voya-*

geurs. He is respected by the Indians as well as by the Canadians in the North, so that he could defeat the schemes whereby it might be sought to impede the journey of the missionaries."

To secure the Red River mission Lord Selkirk gave, by notarial deed, signed by seven assignees, twenty-five acres of land for the erection of a church and of school houses; and by a second deed he gave a tract of land, five miles in depth and seven miles in width, behind that belonging to the Church. The following are the names signed to those deeds :

LORD SELKIRK,	J.-O. PLESSIS,
J.-N. PROVENCHER, *Priest.*	*Bishop of Quebec.*
ROUX, *Priest.*	SEVERE DUMOULIN, *Priest.*
S. DE BEAUJEU.	W. HENRY.

It was on Tuesday, the 18th May, 1818, about noon, that the two missionaries bade farewell to Canada. A few days earlier, Mgr. Plessis had sent them the following instructions:—

1. The missionaries must consider as the first object of their mission to draw the Indian tribes, scattered that vast country, out of barbarism and the disorders that belong thereto.

2. Their second object must be to direct their attention to the bad Christians who have adopted the Indian habits and who live in a state of license, and forgetfulness of their duties.

3. Convinced that the preaching of the Gospel is the most certain means of obtaining such happy results, they will lose no opportunity, be it in their private conversations or in their public instructions, of inculcating its principles and maxims.

4. In order to be the sooner useful to the natives of the country to which they are sent, they will apply themselves from the start, to the study of the Indian languages, and will try to reduce them to regular principles, so as to be able to publish a grammar, after a few years residence there.

5. They will prepare, with as much expedition as possible, for baptism the heathen women who live in a state of concubinage with Chrsitian men, so as to be able to substitute legitimate marriage for irregular union.

6. They will apply themselves with particular care to the Christian education of the children, will, for that purpose, establish schools and catechism classes in all the villages that they may visit.

7. In all places of conspicuous position, whether along the route of the *voyageurs,* or at the meeting places of the Indians, they will be careful to erect high crosses, as an evidence of their taking possession of such places in the name of the Catholic Church.

8. They will frequently inform the people to whom they are sent how severely that religion ordains peace, meekness, and obedience to the laws, both of the State and of the Church.

9. They will make them understand the advantages they have in living under His Britanic Majesty's Government, teaching by word and example respect and fidelity to the Sovereign, accustoming them to address fervent prayers to heaven for the prosperity of His Most Gracious Majesty, for his august family, and for the Empire.

10. They will remain perfectly impartial in regard to the respective claims of the two Companies of the North-West and of the Hudson Bay, remembering that they are sent exclusively for the spiritual good of the people, the

civilization of whom must be for the greater advantage of both Companies.

11. They will fix their residence near Fort Douglas on the Red River, will there build a church, a house, a school, and will draw their livelihood from the best that the lands given to them will afford. Although that river, as well as Lake Winnipeg, into which it flows, are within the territory claimed by the Hudson Bay Company, they will be nonetheless zealous for the salvation of the clerks, employees and *voyageurs* in the service of the North-West Company, being careful to go wheresoever the salvation of souls demands their presence.

12. They will furnish us frequently and regularly with whatever information may interest us concerning the retarding or advancement of the mission. If, notwithstanding their impartial attitude, they are disturbed in the exercise of their functions, they will not abandon their mission before receiving orders from us.

(Signed,) † J. O., *Bishop of Quebec.*

The journey of the missionaries lasted two months; they reached the Red River on the 16th July, 1818.

CHAPTER XVII

SUMMARY.

Legal action taken by Lord Selkirk against the North-West Company.— The grasshopper plague at the Red River.— The Pembina mission.— Interest taken by Lord and Lady Selkirk in the missionaries.— Union of the two Companies.— Sir George Simpson praises the work of the missionaries.— Peace at last restored throughout the North-West.

After the departure of the missionaries, Lord Selkirk, feeling confidence in the future of his colony, turned his entire attention to the North-West Company, and to the task of making its members render an account of all damages they had caused. He institute an action-at-law against that Company, which made the Courts of Upper and Lower Canada ring, and which entailed enormous costs.

Such a powerful Company, as was that of the North-West, is rarely at the end of its resources in defence. The case was carried to England where it made a great deal of commotion, until the month of April, 1820, when Lord Selkirk died. In vain, however, were the ragings of the North-West Company; the arrival of the missionaries had delt it a mortal blow.

On an order of the Colonial Minister, in the spring of 1818, the Forts were restored to their owners.

All along the Red River and throughout the district of Assiniboia peace was completely restored.

It was true that in 1819, in the extreme northern Forts there were a few skermishes between the employees of the

two Companies, but, in 1821, wary of those fratricidal struggles that only resulted in ruin, the two combined in one organization, to be thenceforth called the Hudson Bay Company.

From that hour forward there was no longer any question of the North-West Company; its very name disappeared; the glory of the "Lords of the North Land" vanished; a new reign — that of true civilization — had commenced.

Still the settlers had to face a number of other and very different trials.

"When we arrived at the Red River," says Mgr. Provencher, "that colony, devastated as it had been by the troubles of preceding years, was the picture of destitution, and in reality it combined all the privations of this life.

"Though treated with every respect and attention, eating at the table of the Governor of the colony, the missionaries were not exempt from a participation in the miseries of the country.

"On that table there was neither bread nor vegetables, only buffalo meat that had been dried in the sun or at the fire, and a small amount of fish; there was no milk, no butter, and often neither tea nor sugar."

At that time the majority of the farmers only cultivated their land with the hoe, and only sowed grain in order to have seed for the next year, but never in the hope of using the product of their labor to eat.

The small amount of grain that the settlers sowed in 1818 look very well and promised a fair harvest. When, on the 3rd of August, a cloud of grasshoppers came down on the colony, eat up all the grain, and, in a few weeks, destroyed everything that might have served as food for the people.

At the end of two or three weeks the insects went on to die elsewhere, but before taking their departure they left their eggs in the ground, and the next year those eggs produced millions of fresh grasshoppers that eat all the vegetation until the end of July. When they had their wings they rose in clouds so thich that they completely hid the rays of the sun — so much so that those who watched their departure could look at the orb of day without winking an eye-lid. (*Notes by Mgr. Provencher.*)

That year there was no harvest of any kind. In the spring of 1820 each one hastened to sow whatever quantity of grain he had in reserve, for they always were careful to put a little aside each year. The season was favorable, everything grew splendidly, hope for the future caused the miseries of the past to be forgotten, when, on the 26th July, another cloud of grasshoppers came down.

This time the poor settlers became entirely discouraged; everything was as completely destroyed as if fire had swept the entire country. But still more discouraging were the quantities of eggs that the insects had left in the earth. In 1821 everything in the form of verdure was eaten, and the soil of the fields and of the prairies was left as black as the dust on the highway.

The grasshoppers penetrated everywhere and eat everything — clothes, leather, etc., etc., nothing could be left within reach of them. (*Notes of Mgr. Provencher.*)

They did not leave the colony till the month of August, when their wings had grown sufficiently to permit them to fiy. After that visit there was no seed left in the settlement for the next year.

The Governor of the colony had to send to Dog Prairie (Prairie du Chien), on the Mississippi, nine hundred

miles from the Red River, to get grain for seed. This seed grain was brought too late for that spring's sowing, so that in the year 1821 there was no harvest.

In 1822, the fields were sown early in the spring-time. The season was very favorable for vegetation, and the grain grew with exceptonal vigor. That year the grasshoppers did not come. But, as if it were destined that each year would bring its plague to the settlement, suddenly a vast swarm of field-mice overran the entire place; these tiny animals cut the grain at the root and chopped the stalk into small bits. Still the settlers were enabled to gather in enough of grain to obviate the necessity of going out of the country for seed.

* * *

From 1817 till 1821 the Scotch settlers were in the habit of going to spend each winter with the Half-Breeds and the Canadian *voyageurs* at Pembina. They turned to be hunters like the others and became quite expert in hunting the buffalo on the prairies.

In the spring time, when the farmers returned to seed-down their fields, their families, in order to escape the fatigue of a seventy mile journey, remained at Pembina. The best good feeling existed between the Half-Breeds and the Scotch. That they lived together in the same camp and assisted each other by mutual aid, is an evidence that all the troubles of the past were caused by the North-West Company.

In 1818, in the month of September, Rev. Sévère Dumoulin, the missionary who had accompanied Mgr. Provencher, went to reside at Pembina to there administer spiritual aid to the Catholic residents of that place. The

population in that camp amounted to about three hundred souls. That very same year they build a chapel, a school and a residence for the missionary there. All those poor hunters, so long abandoned to themselves, were so glad, so happy to have a priest in their midst that they would have made any sacrifice to keep him.

The Red River mission was called after St. Boniface. Until the coming of Mgr. Provencher, the people of the place called that locality *La Fourche* (the Fork), on account of it being at the confluence of the Assiniboine and Red River.

The mission at St. Boniface was far from having the resources of livelihood that existed at Pembina. Still, three months after his coming, assisted by a few Canadian colonists, the missionary had built a wooden chapel, in which he managed to also find lodging for himself.

In order to get on with the work of construction and to make the building habitable for the winter, he had to become wood-cutter, carpenter and mason.

The frame of the house was raised in September. To cover it he went to a neighboring swamp and there cut reeds and flat hay which he wove into a thatch. Upon the poor poplar boards that he used for a first roofing he placed a layer of blue clay, into which he stuck the twigs that he had gathered. We can understand that a construction of that character was not an elaborate residence for a priest.

The historian Ross, speaking of the coming of the Catholic missionaries to the Red River, says that their advent caused the poor Scotchmen to feel in a two-fold manner the state of abandonment, spiritually speaking, in which they existed. He says: "While the colonists were thus bemoaning their hard fate and hopeless condition,

several French families, headed by two Catholic priests, arrived from Canada, and took up their abode as settlers in the colony. . . . . The arrival of these people only increased the evil of the day, by adding so many more mouths to feed; besides the grief it caused the settlers to see them in full enjoyment of their religion, while they themselves, who had borne the burden and heat of the day, were wholly destitute of spiritual consolation."

But what must have made them feel stranger still was the fact of seeing Lord Selkirk, one of their own co-religionists, so zealous and so anxious to have a Catholic mission established at St. Boniface, in the very neighborhood of the Scotch settlement. They were fully aware of Lord Selkirk's generous gifts to that Catholic mission, and his efforts to secure the establishment of the same by the Bishop of Quebec. No doubt all that was calculated to grate on the religious feelings of the Scotchmen. Yet they never openly murmured about it.

When Lord Selkirk heard, in Canada, of the fine reception accorded his missionaries, he was as much overjoyed as would have been a good and zealous Catholic. He saw in that reception the assurance of lasting peace in the colony, and, consequently, a solid support for his settlers, who would derive as much benefit as would the Catholics from such a happy state of affairs.

It was then that he wrote the following letter to Mgr. Plessis, the Bishop of Quebec:—

"My Lord,

"During the trip that I have just taken to Upper Canada, I had the pleasure of receiving the good news, from the Red River, of the safe arrival there of Messrs.

Provencher and Dumoulin. These letters, as well as the verbal report that I received from Mr. de Lorimier, on reaching here, show me that the inhabitants, and above all the Canadians, the former *voyageurs* and their Half-Breed families, had evidenced the best of dispositions to profit by the instructions of the missionaries, and that the Indians also showed them a respect that gives reason to believe that they will be equally docile. I trust that this happy beginning will be confirmed by the reports that those gentlemen will not fail to send Your Lordship.

"On reflecting upon the circumstances, as they have been communicated to me, it seems to me that, if they were known in England, assistance might be obtained that would give solid support to the establishment of that mission.

"There are, among the Catholics, some very high families in England (and I have no doubt that Protestants could also be found), who would glory in contributing to the maintenance of a mission of that kind, as soon as they would be aware of the good results it would produce.

"If I were authorized by Your Lordship to communicate that assurance to England, I am fully confident that means would be there found to secure favorable results.

"I heard it said of late that probably Upper Canada will be erected into a separate diocese. If that division takes place, I hope that the Red River will remain in the diocese of Quebec. I would be very sorry if that infant establishment were not to remain under Your Lordship's jurisdiction, under which it has been so happily commenced.

"I remember that last spring, in Quebec, Your Lordship suggested that in the end those distant regions

should have an independent establishment; but, while awaiting the time when the population will have sufficiently increased to be able to support, without assistance, a separate establishment, it seems to me that all those Indian countries should come under Quebec rather than any other diocese; especially so, since the Catholics, scattered over them, only speak the French language, and because Upper Canada could not supply subjects suitable for the duties of the ministry there.

"I have the honor to be, etc., etc.,

(Signed,) SELKIRK."

Lady Selkirk was not any less zealous than her noble husband in assisting the Catholic mission. She wrote to the missionaries that she was preparing a chest in which she was placing linen and articles required for altar service, and that, like Lord Selkirk, she was rejoiced to hear of the good feeling of the Red River people for the priests.

It is clearly evident that Lord Selkirk was the instrument of Divine Providence used to lead the Apostles of the Gospel into the North-West.

In the autumn of 1819, Lord Selkirk, weary from his voyages and undermined in constitution by the worry caused by unceasing struggles with the North-West Company, went with his wife to the South of France to seek repose and recuperation. But neither the mild climate of France nor all the assistance of medical science could restore his strength; he died in the city of Pau, at the foot of the Pyrenees, on the 8th April, 1820.

His death brought about a new arrangement or reorganization of the Hudson Bay Company, and gave a new direction to the march of events in the North-West. At that date, the two Companies had not yet been united. There was merely mention of a treaty of peace between them. It was a period of great anxiety for the colony as well as for the mission — both of which had lost a powerful protector.

In writing on the subject to Mgr. Provencher, Mgr. Plessis said:—

"There is talk of a treaty of peace between the two Associations, that of the Hudson Bay and that of the North-West. I do not know if religion will be taken into consideration, nor if the colony will survive, *should the lot fall to the side of the North-West.* The result will show what may be thought of the matter. If, as I have no doubt, God has His merciful designs on that part of the New World, He will easily find a way of therein sustaining and extending His Kingdom."

In fact, Divine Providence, that laughs at all human opposition to His plans, caused the North-West Company and entirely disappear, within one year after the death of Lord Selkirk, and when it was apparently at the zenith of its glory and power.

The Red River Catholics may look upon Lord Selkirk as the first and greatest benefactor of that mission. It is only just that history should pay a tribute of gratitude and of homage to the memory of that illustrious man who, despite all the calumnies launched against him by his enemies, shall forever remain a grand and imposing figure in the annals of our country.

* * *

After the union of the two Companies it was Mr. Walkett, Lord Selkirk's brother-in-law, and testamentary executor, who was given charge of the Scotch colony.

Before his arrival there was a Governor at Fort Douglas who had a very difficult task to perform. Despite the best intentions in the world and the most careful administration of affairs, it is easy to understand that he could not create plenty in a land that had been devasted by successive scourges, and in which the labor of the farmers had not yet produced sufficient to feed the one-tenth of population.

In 1818, at the time that the missionaries arrived there, Mr. A. McDonell was Governor of the colony. Ross, the historian, draws a picture of him that is far from flattering. He shows him to be a scourge as terrible as that of the insects; he says that the settlers called him the *Grasshopper Governor,* because he did as much damage inside the Fort as the grasshoppers did outside. (He says that while the settlers endured all sorts of privations, he and his friends lived in luxury in the Fort.) This is an accusation so exaggerated that it borders on calumny.

When the missionaries reached the Red River they were received at Fort Douglas and remained there two months, eating, as we have said, at the Governor's table; they were living witnesses of the life led in the Fort, and yet, Mgr. Provencher affirms "that at the Governor's table there was only dried buffalo meat, and that there was neither bread nor vegetables, nor butter, nor tea, nor sugar." If that is what he calls living in luxury, it must be admitted that the bill-of-fare at the Governor's table was not very varied.

Is it because Mr. A. McDonell was a Catholic that the historian Ross launches such serious accusations against him? We might justly suspect as much, for in different places in his work, he allows his bigotry to come to the surface when he sneeringly calls the Catholics *Papists*. In taking up the defence of the Scotch people in this book, we show, at least, more generosity and fairness than does Mr. Ross, who avoids, in all his work, any mention of Mgr. Provencher's name. Yet, Mgr. Provencher is surely one of the most remarkable figures in the story of the Red River settlement; one would needs close his eyes very tightly not to notice his presence.

Twice wiped out by the North-West Company, Lord Selkirk's colony was certainly destined to perish forever had it not been for the life-imparting spirit brought by the missionaries. If Mgr. Provencher was not its restorer and main stay through the peace, which he, more than all others, established in the Red River district.

It was their first Catholic Bishop who, after each fresh trial, brought courage and confidence to the heart of the people. After the grasshopper plague, and especially after the floods of 1826, all the settlers wanted to leave the country, as they believed it to be unhabitable. In truth, there was reason for discouragement, and several inhabitants did leave the Red River for good.

The Catholic Bishop, in the midst of several trials, established lasting institutions at St. Boniface, created a reliance in the future, and strengthened those whose firmness was tottering.

Down to this day the English historians, who have written about the early days of Lord Selkirk's colony, have never said a single word about Mgr. Provencher and have ever confined their praise for the spread of civilization

in that land, to the Scotch and English settlers. We do not wish to take one iota from the credit due to those who, in any way whatsoever, have contributed to the welfare of that country and of its inhabitants, but history should be just and give to each one that which belongs to him. Therefore, when one undertakes to tell the story of the country evangelized by such a man as Mgr. Provencher, it is a flagrant injustice and a patent evidence of prejudice, to pass his name over in silence. Of this grave fault, without hesitation, do we accuse both Ross and Gunn — the two historians of the Red River.

Sir George Simpson, a Hudson Bay Company's Governor, although a Protestant, had much broader views regarding the merits of the first Bishop of St. Boniface, and he did not hesitate to give expression to them. On every available occasion he gave vent to the highest eulogies of Mgr. Provencher and he wished to show his gratitude for all, even in a temporal line, that the Bishop had done for the prosperity of the North-West.

Here is an extract from a resolution adopted, at a Council meeting at York Factory, on the motion of Sir George Simpson, himself. We take it from the original text:—

"Extract from the Minutes of Council, held at York Factory, 2nd July, 1825.

"Great benefit being experienced from the benevolent and indefatigable exertion of the Catholic mission at the Red River in the welfare and the moral and religious instruction of its numerous followers; and it being observed, with much satisfaction, that the influence of the mission under the direction of the Right Reverend Bishop

of Juliopolis, has been uniformly directed to the best interest of the settlement and of th country at large, it is Resolved: That in order to mark our approbation of such laudable and disinterested conduct on the part of said mission, under the direction of the Right Rev'd Bishop that a sum of £50 per annum be given towards the support, etc., etc."

Such is the manner in which large minded men knew how to appreciate the good done for the Red River colony, not only for the salvation of their souls, but also for their temporal prosperity, by Mgr. Provencher.

The country that, until the coming of the missionaries, only knew divisions, enmities, jealousies and deeds of vengeance, beheld a most perfect union spring up between the inhabitants of every race and creed.

This good feeling among the first inhabitants of the Red River district is a fact that deserves to be specially noted, above all when we know that in America almost all the colonies that consisted of peoples of different races began their histories with manifestations of unfortunate and fanatical bigotry. An illustration of this is to be found in the early history of the New England States, in which section the Catholics were long and fearfully persecuted. On the contrary, at the Red River, after 1818, the English, Scotch, Irish, Canadians, Half-Breeds and Indians all lived in perfect harmony and were of mutual assistance to each other.

* * *

In 1820, Rev. Mr. Provencher, as yet only a priest, left the colony to go to Quebec. Mgr. Plessis had asked for and obtained from Rome a Bull erecting the Red River district into a diocese; and the Bull was addressed to Rev.

Mr. Provencher. He remained two years in Canada. Before returning to his mission he was consecrated Bishop at Three-Rivers, on the 12th May, 1822, with the title of Bishop of Juliopolis. He left Montreal on the 19th May, and was back in his diocese on the 7th August. From that moment forward the Catholic hierarchy was established in the North-West. From 1822 forward the political and social history of the North-West walked side by side with the story of the developing missions down the highway of the years. That period will constitute the subject matter of another volume.

NOTES OF EVIDENCE

TO JUSTIFY CERTAIN CONTENTIONS

FIRST NOTE.

The North-West Company used the evidence of one Louis Nolin, who resided at the Red River and who was at Fort Douglas, when the battle of La Grenouillère took place; the following is his evidence as it was given upon oath, at Fort William, before a Justice of the Peace, on the 21st August, 1816.

DEPOSITION OF LOUIS NOLIN.

The Deponent having been sworn declares as follows:—

"That at the end of the summer of 1815, he reached the Red River with Mr. Robertson; that two days after their arrival, a consultation was held at the North-West Fort (Fort Gibraltar), occupied by Duncan Cameron, his clerks and interpreters, for the purpose of devising means to drive away, at one stroke, the colonists that returned to settle at the Red River (after having been already driven away from there).

That Peter Pangman (surnamed Bostonais), who was one of the deliberating parties, had told him some time afterwards about the affair, and that he, Pangman, had insisted on chasing the colonists away at once, but that he did not know what excuse to give to justify such an act, and that it was therefore decided to await until a pretext for action could be found, always in the hope that the colonists would, on account of the lack of provisions, leave the country.

"That during the month of October, 1815, two Indians, coming from Fort Gibraltar that Duncan Cameron then occupied, told him that Charles Hesse, of the North-West Company had threatened to kill them if they had any further relations with the Scotch settlers.

"That during the winter of 1815 and 1816, Séraphin Lamarre, a North-West Company's clerk, told him that he had received a letter from Alexander Fraser (stationed at Lake Qu'Appelle), in which the writer bade him have courage, because that he (Fraser) was the fifth who could stir up the Bois-Brûlés to go, the next spring, to exterminate whatever Scotch settlers were still at the Red River.

"That on the morning of the 17th June, 1816, Governor Semple, of Fort Douglas, called him to act as interpreter for two Indians named Moustouche and Courte Oreille, both of whom had left the Half-Breed camp, that Alexander McDonell commanded (at Portage de la Prairie). These two deserters informed the Governor that in two days he would be attacked by the Bois-Brûlés (Half-Breeds) who were led by Cuthbert Grant, Houle, Primeau, Fraser, Bourassa, Lacerpe and Thomas McKay, all employees in the service of the North-West Company; that they were all determined to take Fort Douglas, and that if they met with the slightest resistance they would kill men, women and children, and that if they put their hands on Robertson they would cut him into a thousand pieces.

"That the 19th June, in the afternoon, he saw about fifty Bois-Brulés coming towards the residences of the Scotch settlers, above La Grenouillère, about three miles from Fort Douglas.

The deponent, being in front of the Fort, saw Governor

Semple, with twenty-eight men, coming out of it; the deponent got up on a bastion and thence saw the Governor place his men in line; a few minutes later he sent a horseman towards the Governor to find out what was going on. The horseman soon returned to say that the Half-Breeds were in great numbers, and that they had taken the Governor; on which the deponent sent another envoy to learn exactly the facts. Six minutes later the second messenger was back and announced that five of the English gentlemen, the Governor, and several others had been killed.

"On the 20th June the deponent went to the Half-Breed camp that was at La Grenouillère; he recognized in the enemy's camp two men and one woman who belonged to the colony and who had been made prisoners before Governor Semple had got up to the Half-Breeds.

"The deponent entered into a conversation with Cuthbert Grant, McKay, Houle, Primeau, Fraser, Bourassa, and Lacerpe, who were each boasting of his own exploits the evening before against the English. Cuthbert Grant said that, if the Fort were not given up to him the following day, he would kill the men, women and children.

"On the 21st the English gave up Fort Douglas to the Half-Breeds. The deponent, who was in the Fort, learned from them that Governor Semple had first been wounded by Cuthbert Grant, and that he had been killed by François Deschamps who was engaged in the service of the North-West Company.

"On the 22nd June, Cuthbert Grant drove the settlers away and sent them to the Jack River (Rivière au Brochet), and took possession of the Fort and of all their belongings.

"There was, on that day, a meeting of the North-West

Company's people and the Half-Breeds asked Mr. McKenzie if Lord Selkirk had a right to establish a colony at the Red River. Mr. McKenzie replied that he had no such right, and that the only right he had was to send traders there.

"Despite this last declaration, the deponent declares that immediately the Hudson Bay Company's traders were driven away from the Red River.

"(Signed,) LOUIS NOLIN."

SECOND NOTE.

As the North-West Company frequently repeated in writings in its own defence, that the soldiers engaged by Lord Selkirk were a gang of deserters, abandoned to debauchery and only good to pillage, we will here give the eulogistic testimony, in their regard, of Mr. Fauché, a lieutenant of the Meuron regiment. That testimony will also serve to refute the historian Ross, who, without ever having known those military men, constituted himself an echo of the Company,—doubtless because the greater number of them were Catholics, and Ross held in holy horror all that savored of the *Papist*.

"In 1809, while the Meuron regiment was stationed at Gibraltar, the English Government allowed that all the Germans and Piedmonteses who were forced by conscription into the armies of Bonaparte and from which they had deserted at the first chance, might take service in the English Army. The Meuron regiment was sent to Malta that same year, 1809, and remained there until 1813, when it crossed to America. On the departure of the regiment from the Island, His Excellency, Lieutenant General Oakes, Governor of Malta, issue the following Garrison Order:—

"Malta, 4th May, 1813.

"Garrison Order,

"Lieutenant General Oakes cannot allow the Meuron regiment to leave this garrison where it has been for such a long time under his orders, without testifying to how satisfied he has been with its good conduct and its discipline, a conduct that was equally manifested in all ranks. The regiment will leave her in as good order as any of His Majesty's regiments.

"The Lieutenant General has no doubt that this regiment, by its good conduct, its bravery in the service in which it will soon be employed, will confirm the high opinion that he has formed regarding it, and will deserve the praise and approbation of the General under whose command it will be placed, and to whom he will not fail to express the just praises that it deserves.

"He begs to assure the regiment of the ardent good wishes which he entertains for its glory and successes, and of the lively interest he will always feel in its happiness.

"(Signed,) P. ANDERSON, D. A. G."

When the regiment was finally licensed to Canada, His Excellency, Sir John Sherbrooke, issued a Garrison Order that would do honor to any regiment existing.

"Office of the D. A. G.,
"Quebec, 26th July, 1816.

"In separating from the Meuron and Watteville regiments, both of which His Excellency has had the advan-

tage of commanding in other parts of the world, Sir John Sherbrooke offers Lieutenant Colonel de Meuron and Lieutenant-Colonel May, as well as to the officers and soldiers of the two corps, his congratulations in as much as they have, by their excellent conduct in Canada, sustained the reputation that their past services had justly acquired for them.

"His Excellency cannot hesitate to declare that His Majesty's service has derived much advantage during the last war from their bravery and their good discipline.

"(Signed,) J. HARVEY, Lieut.-Col.,
Dep. Adj. Gen.

"As it is not to be expected that an English General is the man to praise those who do not deserve it, can it be believed that the men that were deemed worthy of such eulogy, could have bemeaned themselves, and could have become brigands in accompanying the Scottish nobleman, Lord Selkirk, and in desiring to establish themselves under the protection of a Government which they had learned to appreciate during the time of their service under its control.

"The North-West Company declares that they were drunk the day they entered Fort William. I declare that statement to be absolutely false; not one of the men was the least intoxicated, and they had not the means and ways of becoming so."

(Signed,) "G. A. FAUCHE,
Lieutenant of the de Meuron Regiment.

THIRD NOTE.

The North-West Company sought in all its writings in its own defense to blacken the reputations of all who embraced the cause of Lord Selkirk and of his colonists. There is no imaginable lie that it did not invent to injury him. According to the Company, Lord Selkirk, Miles MacDonell, the officers and soldiers of the de Meuron regiment were nothing other than robbers and banditti, unfit for civilized society. Twenty times is the same thing repeated in the pamphlet published by the Company. But whenever there is question of their own members, then they are all mild gentlemen, who only used force to repel the attacks of a vicious enemy. In speaking of Alexander McDonell, who had collected the Half-Breeds at Fort Qu'Appelle during the winter of 1815 and 1816 and prepared the attack of the colony, the Company's pamphlet paints him as a man full of humanity and regard for the colonists. The pamphlet shows him as recommending Grant, when leaving Portage de la Prairie to attack the colony, to pass at a distance from Fort Douglas and to molest no person.

"Yet the same McDonell, on learning of the massacre at La Grenouillère, cried out, in a moment of philanthropic sentiment, 'G — D — it! good news! Twenty-two Englishmen killed ! ! !'"

The same man had declared, some time before, to an Indian chief in council, "that if the settlers made the slightest resistance the ground would be watered with their blood."

A few weeks earlier, Alexander McDonell, hearing that eighteen employees of the Hudson Bay Company had died of hunger in the extreme North, at once announced the news to his friend Cameron in these terms: *"glorious news from Athabaska."*

The horrible assassination of Mr. Keveny, by order of Archie McLellen, one of the North-West Company's Associates; the barbarous conduct of Norman McLeod towards the Scotch settlers driven out of the Red River

district; all these things abundantly prove that Lord Selkirk's enemies were not models of humanity.

The North-West Company sought to have the responsibility for the dark drama at La Grenouillère fall upon the head of Governor Semple, stating that the deaths of his men were simply due to his own imprudence in leaving the Fort with armed men to go block the road of the North-West Company's employees.

It is an important question to know whether Governor Semple had been guilty of imprudence or whether he died a victim to duty.

At Fort Douglas the Governor was in charge of the settlers and was in conscience bound to rush to their aid if any danger threatened them, either on the part of the Indians or from any other quarter. The men and the arms that he had in the Fort had been given him for that purpose. So was it in olden times, in the beginning of the Canadian colony, that forts were built and garrisons were placed in them to protect the colonists against the incursions of the Indians. When, in vast numbers, the Iroquois poured in on the colony and threatened to destroy it, the guardians of the Forts, without counting their numbers, went out to meet them; Dollard Desormeau had only sixteen companions with whom to face the great Iroquois army at the foot of the Long-Sault.

Governor Semple knew from positive information (Indians had notified him two days before), that the colony was to be attacked on the 19th June by the servants of the North-West Company, and that the settlers were to be all driven out, or else massacred if they made the least resistance.

Well, then! We ask any military person who knows his duty and has at heart its fulfilment, even at the cost of

his life, if, under the circumstances and in the situation of that 19th June, 1816, Governor Semple could have remained still in his Fort while the settlers that he was in duty bound to protect were about to become the victims of the servants of the North-West Company?

Let it not be said that the seventy horsemen whom passed far out on the prairie were going down the river Winnipeg to carry provisions to their people. That story is played out and can only be accepted by those who have not made a serious study of the Red-River history from 1810 to 1816.

As for us, we do not hesitate to say that Governor Semple died a victim to duty. It may be that he failed in his tactics and that a military officer, accustomed to the art of warfare, might have come safer out of the difficulty: but that does not alter the question.

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